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No.69 August 1996

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Command & Conquer:
Red Alert

Battleground:
Shiloh

iM1A2

& more...

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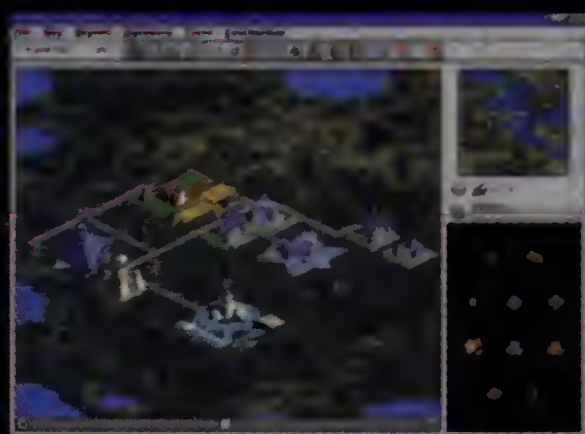
Reviews: Chaos Overlords, Battleground: Waterloo
Duke Nukem 3D, Star Trek: Klingon, VR Soccer 96

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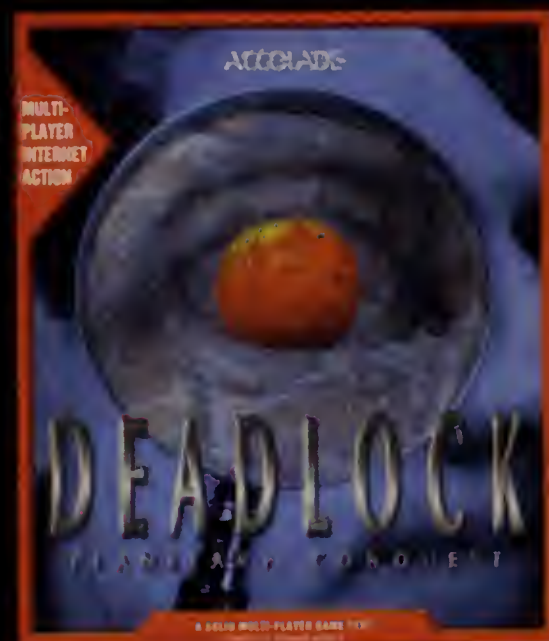


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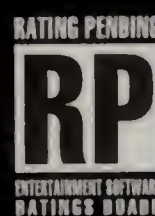


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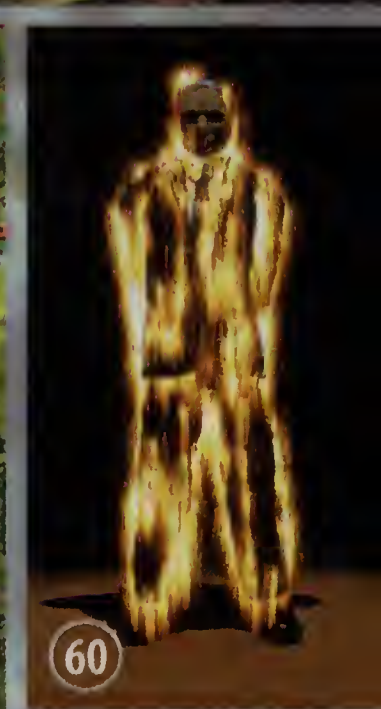
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 MODERN BATTLES



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review ratings

Classic	★	★	★	★	★
Excellent	★	★	★	★	☆
Good	★	★	★	☆	☆
Fair	★	★	☆	☆	☆
Why?	★	☆	☆	☆	☆

All ratings are assigned by the author of the article. The "Stamp of Approval" is awarded by the editors of the magazine.



Running CGCD under Windows 95

Place the CD disc in your CD-ROM drive. The disc will autoplay. If it fails to do so, right click on your CD-ROM icon (located in "My Computer") and select OPEN. Double-click on the "Install" icon. If at any point during the installation you are asked to install Video for Windows, choose NO.

Running CGCD under Windows 3.1

Place the CD in your CD-ROM drive and choose File, Run from the Program Manager. Type "D:\INSTALL," where D: is the letter of your CD-ROM drive, and press ENTER. Follow the instructions on screen. After installation is complete, double-click the created icon to start the program.

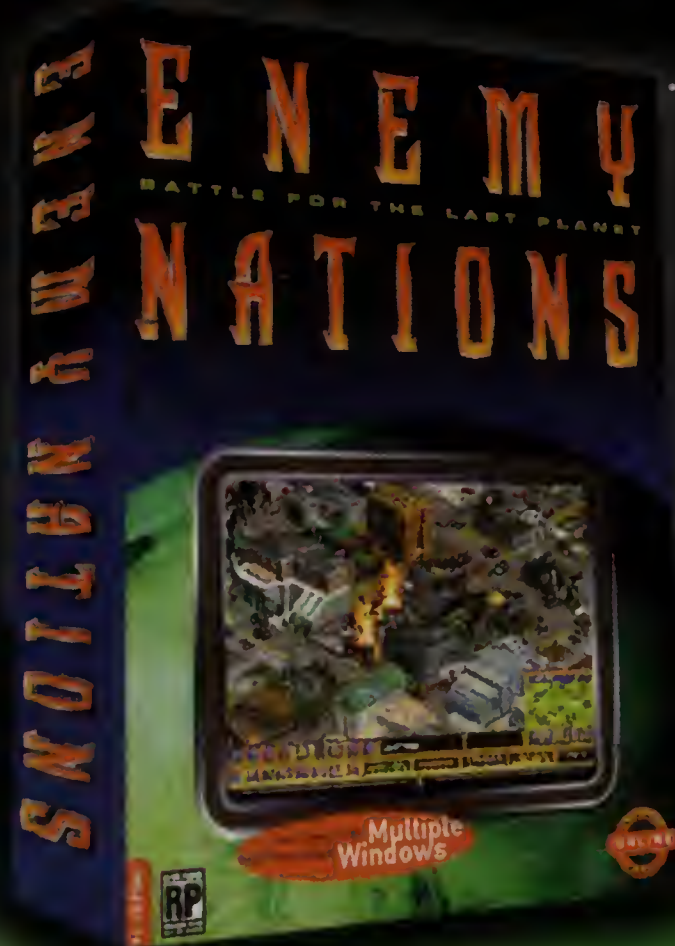
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The Great Divide

Just back from E3, it's become clear that the computer entertainment industry's gotten to the point where it can go virtually every direction at once, and all at full tilt; never in the history of this medium has there been such a dramatic change in scale in the sheer resource available for creation of product.

The problem is, a lot of it is just that – product. The irony is that the software which you *haven't* been hearing about for the past year or two already is likely to be the stuff to ship first; it's also likely to be the least interesting of the next generation of computer games. The software you *have* been hearing about, in news and previews and internet chatter – is mostly still in development, waiting for that blockbuster Christmas season, that time of the year in which all good Americans celebrate what they hold most sacred: buying and selling.

Is there any problem with this? Not really; some of the best games of the upcoming year are coming from the usual suspects, and they're not so much blow-me-away-I've-never-seen-the-like as they are they-sure-spent-a-lot-of-time-putting-in-the-detail-here. As has traditionally been the case in gaming, you've had an early chance to consider what you're likely to pay attention to in what's showing up next, and you're just waiting patiently now for it to finalize. For many of the major known works upcoming, it was clear at E3 that the designers are busy putting together games with unprecedented levels of detail, creativity and thorough testing. Look forward to a less buggy Christmas this year, even if you are having a buggy summer right now. Better yet, look forward to a fantastic first two quarters in '97, when many of the hottest titles are due to show.

Meanwhile, after more than a decade of paying attention to computer-based entertainment, some of my own fondest hopes are starting to get a little ragged around the edges. I've always been a bit of a dreamy-eyed idealist when it comes to computer gaming, and have hoped that over time, the medium would grow to the point where it would become competitive with other forms of entertainment people over the age of 18 might consider. That *has* happened in part; the audience for this stuff is now, by all reports, 28+, and I'd guess there are more thirty- and even forty-somethings dropping by the software shoppes these days than most people inside the industry might guess.

On the other hand, in the industry itself many of the designers and marketing departments and advertising agencies still seem caught up with a decade-old concept of what computer gaming is all about, focused primarily on ideas hardened into seeming stone during the heyday of Nintendo. Outside the core gaming audience – as local news reports on E3 seen after-hours each day painfully confirmed – most people still think of entertainment on the computer as consisting primarily of bleeps and bleeps and joysticks pushing around arcade aliens and cutesy little creatures who have to be moved up, over and around blocks of various colors and shapes. Something the 8-14 crowd loves.

This perception should only take about 20 more years to overcome. It wouldn't matter much, except for the fact that the big money *in* the industry seems to think that this ancient perception should be the one catered to, to "broaden the audience." Intelligent designers and gamers alike squirm under this pressure, but it ain't going away, as the tide of look-alike stuff upcoming will make patently clear.

Still, there's hope. The quality of narrative in gaming still falls well short of what's present in even mediocre literature, the quality of story in gaming's still nowhere near as enticing as it is in a good TV soap, but it's improving, slowly. Simulations and war/strategy games are going to get even more impressive, at least.

It may prove to be true over time that computer entertainment is intrinsically low-brow in aspiration and potential, especially when driven by commerce. That's fine, I guess; just not what I'm looking for. I suspect I'm not alone.

– Steve Wartofsky, Editor



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Editorial Offices	2 Millet Street, Unit 2 Richmond, VT 05477 Tel: 802-434-3060 FAX: 802-434-6493
CompuServe Internet	76711,347 splus@together.net
Publisher	Yale Brozen
Managing Editor	Steve Bauman
Editor	Steve Wartofsky
Associate Editors	Scott Udell, Cindy Yans
Production Director	Ed Mitchell
Creative Director	David Powell
Art Director	Terri Davis



CD Editor	Peter Smith
CD Art Director	Ida Cheinman
Technical Director	John Radewitz, Jr.
Audio Director	Greg Henry
Ad Director	Russ Hoefer Tel: 847-441-6452 Fax: 847-441-6584
Advertising	Jeff Mather Eastern Regional Sales Manager Tel: 802 767-9144 X531 Fax: 802 767-1124
	Jeff Lubetkin Western Regional Sales Manager Tel: 818 222-7516 Fax: 818 222-7518
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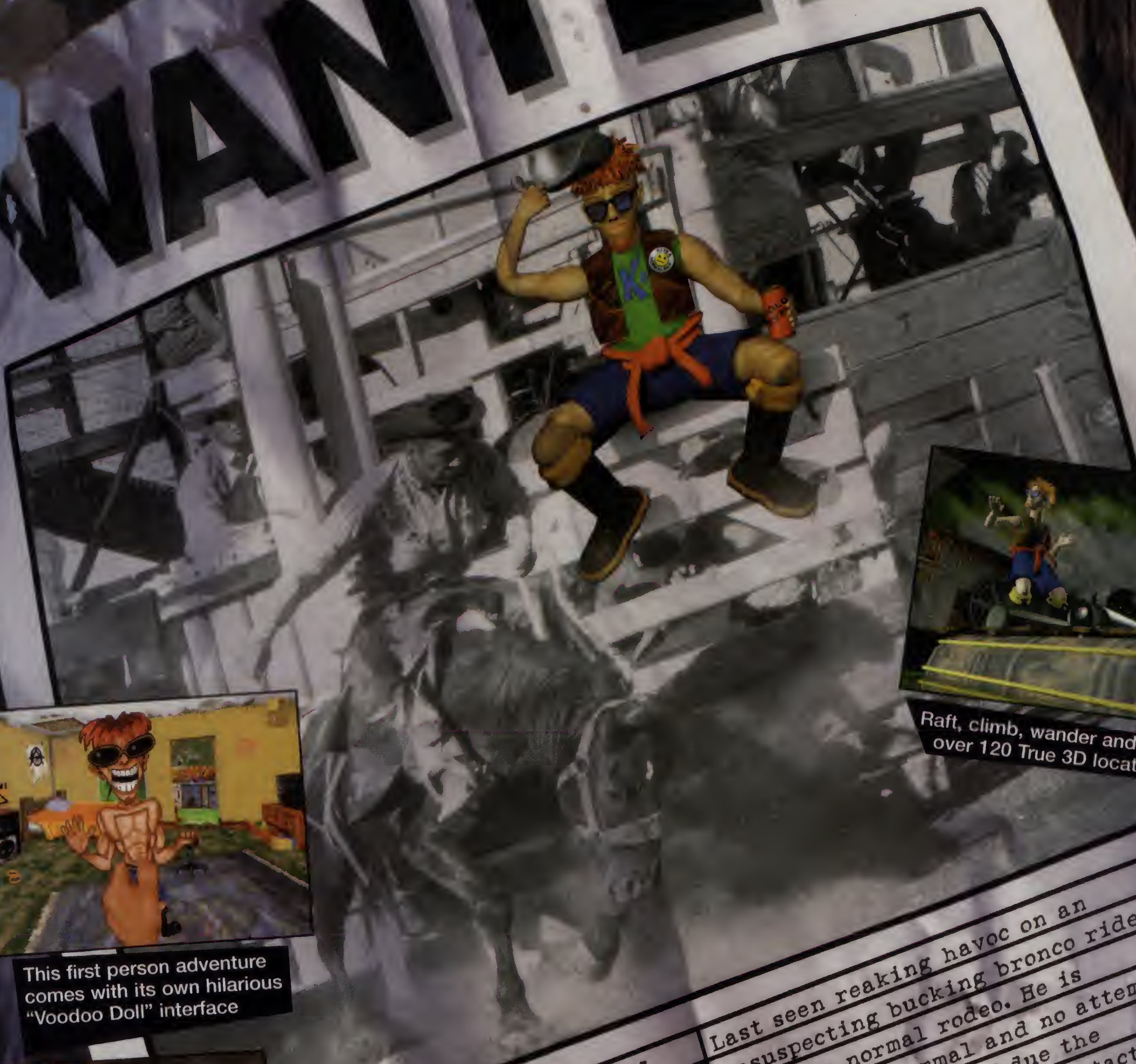
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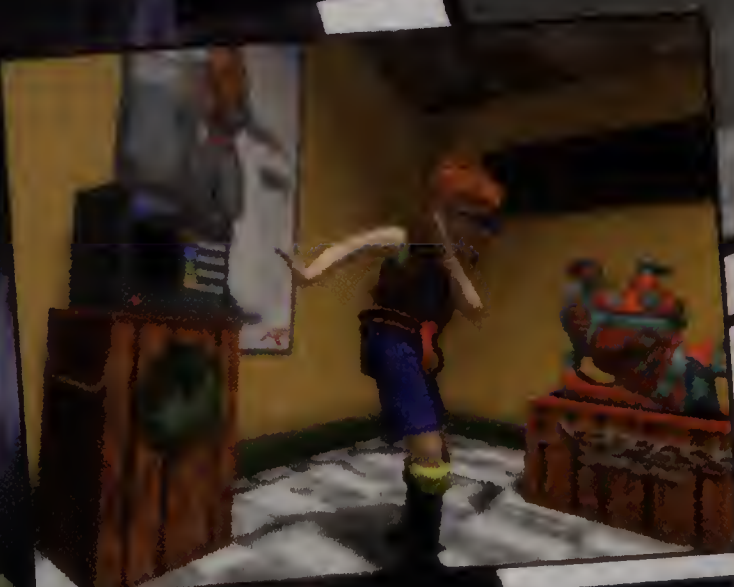
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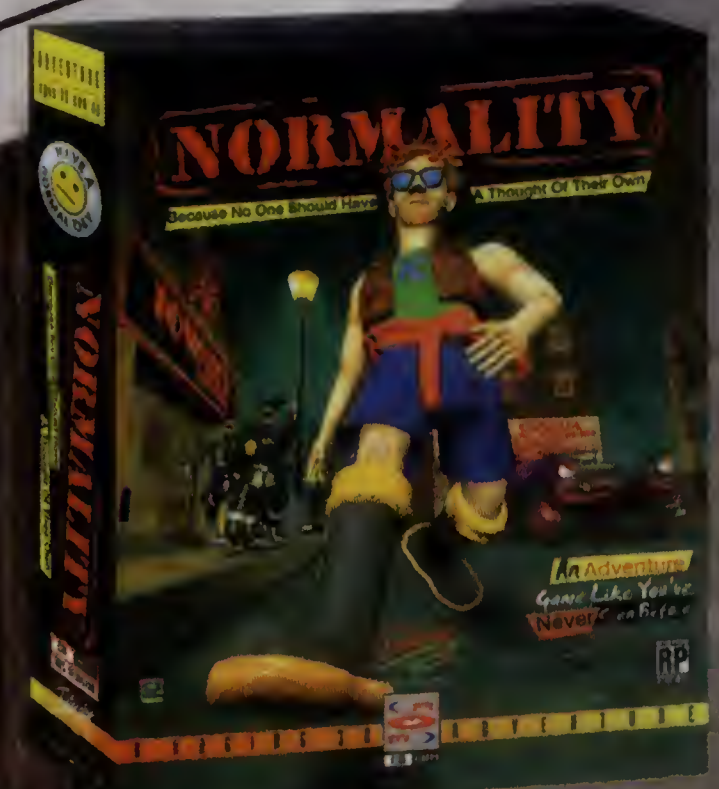
 <p>Protecting the Normal Community</p> <p>District #13</p>	Suspect Name: "Kent"	<p>Last seen reaking havoc on an unsuspecting bucking bronco rider during a normal rodeo. He is extremely abnormal and no attempt should be made to subdue the suspect. If you see him, Contact the Norm Police and let them do the hog-tying, they're good at it.</p> <p>The Normality Police Can Be Contacted At: http://www.interplay.com</p>
	Sex: male	
	Height: 5' 9"	
	Weight: 157 lbs	
	Eyes: Under Sunglasses	
Hair: Flaming Red		
Age: 20-Something		



NYP3



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Reader Service No. 68



So riddle me this...



...Holy 3D, Batman, what would happen if every company decided to make the same game?

[We sent everyone to E3 to find out.]

We came. We saw. We left. Here's the proof.

You're going to be hearing "3D" until you're sick of it for the next, um... hmm... could be a while. Let's stop and say it again, Sam: there's nothing *intrinsically* wrong with putting together a first-person perspective, 3D environment. In fact, it's probably one of the ways *all* games will go – at least in parts – in the near future. You could do amazing things with such technology.

The problem with what we saw at the *Electronic Entertainment Expo* (E3) in Los Angeles is that 3D has become a means unto itself. Too many second-string designs are cropping up, still trying to cash in on the basic *Doom* concept, without even the sophistication of an *Ultima Underworld* underlying the basic engine. Tools are out there to auto-construct this kind of thing and make it look really neat with almost no effort; add a little licensing and some fresh graphics and presto – you have a new product.

The danger here is the same it's been in the past, when a successful concept's been swamped for a long time by everyone else in the industry putting together sequels and copycat designs: the sea of similar-looking, similar-playing games risks demoralizing the audience for computer gaming entirely. Some people must be wondering already whether CD-ROMs will make as good land-fill as Atari cartridges did not too long ago. Watch out.

Let us hope that – like the tide of full-motion video "games" we're finally shut of – the current tide of endless *Doom*-alikes will finally give way to more balanced and sophisticated game design. Let's hope that "3D" will become



an *element* in overall game design, used only when and where appropriate and necessary, instead of the be-all and end-all it looked like at this year's E3. Expect a tide of 3D shooters to wash over the Fall/Xmas season; grab vigorously for those few games bobbing gently in the waves.

The good news is that this year's E3 represented better overall quality in the industry than we've ever seen in computer gaming. There were few truly atrocious products, even though there were also few fresh stand-outs. Companies seem to be pulling back a bit from pushing the techno-cutting edge, too, and focusing instead on putting together quality gameplay (when they're not doing 3D-shooters). CRPGs look ready to make a comeback, adventures – while further and fewer between – are going for depth and improved narrative quality, simulations are getting as complex and sophisticated as busi-



DIABLO

ness software suites, action games are heading towards true arcade quality (supported by graphics and peripheral hardware to best even the next-generation consoles), sports games are rivaling sims in depth and detail, and even curmudgeonly old war/strategy games are getting face and interface lifts and AI improvements to put them well beyond what's gone before in PC gaming. Finally, multi-player's become all the rage. The Internet should make LA's Harbor Freeway look like a Formula 1 racetrack if all the upcoming multi-player online games prove as successful as planned. Meanwhile, a host of independent game-oriented online services are warming up at the starting gate.

At the core of the industry still remains a commitment to solid game design, making appropriate use of



AGE OF EMPIRES

advanced graphics, peripheral and sound technology to push the whole experience forward to greater coherence and depth. Picking and choosing will be critical this year, however. There's an overwhelming ton of stuff on the way. Get smart, not swamped – look before you buy and *take your time finding the good stuff*. Too many companies out there are shooting for a good first impression and a quick buck. We'll help you sort through them to the cool stuff in the coming months. Now, on with the show!



STEEL PANTHERS II: MODERN BATTLES

Expo Highlights

Dominion

PAGE 14

7th Level, those guys who do those cartoon games, do real-time robots-blasting-each-other-to-bits strategy.

Diablo

PAGE 17

Blizzard goes to hell and returns with what appears to be a jewel of a game. Random dungeons, multiplayer play, will you ever need another game?

Unreal

PAGE 25

... is what's it's called, and it's also an apt description of how it looked. Epic guns for the big time with their MMX and 3D accelerated blast-a-thon.

iM1A2

PAGE 28

If anyone can finally deliver a true sequel to the classic *M1 Tank Platoon* it would have to be Interactive Magic.

Falcon 4.0

PAGE 32

Will the ambitions of the *Electronic Battlefield System* finally be realized with this, the latest version of the venerable *Falcon*?

Age of Empires

PAGE 33

Would you want to play a strategy game designed by the guy who helped create *Railroad Tycoon* and *Civilization*? Microsoft hopes so.

Privateer: The Darkening

PAGE 38

Many gamers liked Origin's original *Privateer* better than *Wing Commander*. This is your ticket to the seedy world of space trading and combat.

The Space Bar

PAGE 42

Meretzky returns, and Rocket Science has him. His latest is set in an alien world. Kind of like *Planetfall*, only different. And you can drink with weird aliens.

Rama

PAGE 46

The Arthur C. Clarke classic is brought to life by Clarke himself, Gentry Lee and those adventuring fools at Sierra. A rich story and beautiful graphics.

Steel Panthers II: Modern Battles

PAGE 48

Gary Grigsby and SSI return to the system that garnered the award for "Best Wargame of 1995" from just about every magazine.

Battleground: Shiloh

PAGE 50

TalonSoft's *Battleground* system continues its evolution into one of the finest on the market.

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

PAGE 54

What's to say about this? Aside from the new high-resolution graphics and the excellent gameplay that Westwood usually delivers, that is...

Dominion

Bots kick Butte (and Tundra)

Even the competition could not help breathing, "coooooool...", when assessing this gut-wrenching, action-strategy game which churns with real-time sortie and spits fireworks at us. *Dominion*, which unavoidably evokes memories of *Command & Conquer* and *Warcraft II*, looks like it might become one of the more tantalizing addictions of 1996.

The Government tentacles have been wriggling toward the fringes of the galaxy where, in order to continue providing an open line of supplies, they need to focus on the assistance of private enterprise. So they hire Ross Perot, er no, they hire *you* to run a multi-system corporation to settle the disputes in the newly conquered colonies, hence stabilizing the Phygos System.

It becomes a matter of men and materials now, as you advance through the planetary system by building structures, vehicles and defenders on each planet. You may choose from one of four species: the alien Scorps, the alien Darkens, Humans, or Mercenaries (the tutti-frutti of the lot). Each race begins



on a planet most suited to its needs.

But wait, there's more! 7th level announces a "Build Your Own Race" Internet contest, from which the resulting new races will be downloadable. Features that further enhance versatility include head-to-head and modem play, as well as a Level Editor allowing players to create maps, design scenario conditions and specify species characteristics and attributes.

With over 10,000 frames of real-time rendered animation at four times the resolution of C&C (apologies to Westwood...for the moment), *Dominion* may just provide an activity from which your families will have to *rip* you away...clicking and screaming.

— Windows

— Cindy Yans

21ST CENTURY ENTERTAINMENT

Synnergist

The 3DO company will now handle distribution for their games. The pinball company makes a foray into graphic adventures with this science-fiction game. Track a serial killer through a secret society filled with, uh, secrets. — DOS

Pinball Construction Kit

Build pinball tables for fun (but no profit). Import your own graphics and sounds and you may be able to come up with some really scary tables. — Windows

Airport 97

It's *SimAirport*. Control all aspects of an airport as you set up baggage paths, customs, security, cleaning, catering, attract major airlines, and make sure every flight is at least an hour late. — Windows

3D REALMS

Duke Nukem Forever

The sequel to everyone's favorite *Doom*-killer is on its way from GT Interactive. Perhaps the most surreal moment of the show was seeing *Duke* running alongside *Quake* at GT Interactive's booth. There's little word on what the sequel will offer, but suffice it to say, it'll be more of the same. — DOS

Blood & Shadow Warrior

It's buckets o' blood in *Blood*. Rip people's hearts out, impale them, shoot them and bore them to death. *Shadow Warrior* has voodoo dolls, the old hairspray/match combo and the legendary pitchfork. — DOS

Prey

The real *Quake*-killer, with the next generation 3D engine. Become the hunter while being hunted as you're unleashed with intelligent enemies bent on killing you. Looks good... — DOS

47-TEK

Team 47 GOMAN

Work proceeds on this true 3D action mech game. The "47-DO 5D Graphics Engine" is basically complete, and the final touches of gameplay and balance are being tweaked. Your job is to take control of one of five mechs and battle a series of giant monsters bent on destroying several major cities. Saturday matinee fun comes to your PC. — Windows

7TH LEVEL

Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail

Co-produced by the original Python's Eric Idle (who says he's being paid "literally hundreds of dollars for this"), the predictably wacky comedy-strategy-adventure invites *you* to laugh, solve and play Spank the Virgin (the game with more pink cheeks than we've seen all season). — Windows, Macintosh

Return To Krondor

7th Level's coup in obtaining the license to Ray Feist's world of *Krondor* promises the long awaited sequel to *Betrayal at Krondor* is well on the way. This 3-D role-playing game is richly storied in eight large chapters, and appears to be gorgeously rendered and scored in what



we hope will be a worthy follow-up to its eminent precursor. — Windows

Ace Ventura: The CD-ROM Game

Ace travels to over 30 locations world wide to drill for hair tonic and shop for Hawaiian shirts. This is an adventure cartoon. Animals are there, too...and oh yeah, puzzles. — Windows

Cold Blooded

This hard core action adventure finds universal destruction imminent. Guess who it's up to to save the universe from annihilation? That's right, *you*, the player! As Finn, a cold-blooded warrior (hence the title), you will outwit evil, rescue the heroine and delve into your subconscious — all at the same time. — Windows

Tracer

Choosing from one of four ambitious hired hackers, the player assumes the role of a tech-

no-thief who must survive the relentless pursuit of the lethal Tracer virus by plunging to the computer's data core. A build-your-path-before-you action game, *Tracer* employs third person perspective in a real-time 3-D environment. – Windows

G-Nome

Cinematics are blended with hard-core combat as the story about Joshua Gant's pursuit of the G-NOME, a genetically altered super warrior, unfolds. – Windows

ACCESS SOFTWARE, INC.

The Pandora Directive

The new Tex Murphy Interactive Movie – it features six CDs and Barry Corbin, Tanya Roberts and Kevin McCarthy. You are Tex. You



ERADICATOR



MECHWARRIOR: MERCENARIES



TIME COMMANDO



THE ELK MOON MURDER

are manly. You stop at nothing to investigate what's going on with the government's biggest secret of the 20th century. Have box will open.

– DOS, Windows

Links LS

Arnold Palmer at Latrobe Country Club

Beyond scenic, beyond "and-you-are-there," beyond any golf sim we've seen, these titles look pretty special. Take along *Arnold Palmer at Latrobe Country Club*. Play in his shoes or by his side – a fashion tip opportunity! – DOS, Windows

ACCLAIM

Alien Trilogy

This 3-D first-person action game puts the player into the shoes of Ripley as she fights her way through more than 30 levels of everything from face huggers to Queen aliens. Other Acclaim action titles include *Batman Forever: The Arcade Game*, *Battlesport*, *Bubble Bobble*, *X-Men: Children of the Atom*, *Dragonheart: Fire & Steel*, *Iron Man/X-O Manowar In Heavy Metal*, *Space Jam*, *WWF In Your House*, *Striker 96*, *Mortal Kombat I & II Duo*, *NBA Jam Extreme* (it's *NBA Jam*, but it's EXTREME), *The Crow: City of Angels* and *Super Motocross Championship*. Finally (whew) there's the adventure game *Night of the Monsters*. – DOS, Windows

Magic: The Gathering

We hear you... you're saying "I thought MicroProse was doing this." Well, they are. This is different. Acclaim's first *Magic* title is a real-time strategy combat game. It includes both Duel and Campaign modes, and will be playable over modem, network or serial link. – Windows

Stratosphere: Conquest of the Skies

This is one of those networkable real-time strategy game. Or at least, strategy in the Acclaim sense of the word, which is probably a lot more action oriented than, say, a MicroProse strategy game. Magic and technology combine with floating fortresses over a planet ravaged by rebellion. – Windows

Frank Thomas "Big Hurt" Baseball

Features include motion captured sprites, real players, stats in 27 categories, 3D rendered stadiums, and player fatigue and substitutions. Also on the way is *NFL Quarterback Club '97*, with most of the same features. – DOS

ACCOLADE

Deadlock: Planetary Conquest

You probably already know everything there is to know about this upcoming science-fiction strategy conquest game. The multiplayer action is excellent over a network or the Internet, the 3D graphics look sharp, the rendered aliens look particularly, uh, alien, and it's easy and fun to play. – Windows

Star Control 3

The release date on this has slipped to "when it's done." The complexity of the game is enormous, but it does appear to be worth the wait. It combines adventuring with alien interaction (which has to be seen to be believed), space combat (multiplayer), exploration and colony building. – DOS

NFL Legends Football '97

The *Unnecessary Roughness* engine is tanked in favor of the all-new one powering this entry. Play teams from multiple eras (1930's, 50's and 60's) and compete against modern players. Play by the rules of each era and you'll be shocked to see how the game has evolved over the years. – DOS, Windows

Eradicator

Accolade enters the 3D action genre with this entry. It adds multiple characters for the player to control, third person play, missile cameras, strong physics modeling, and a more platform-oriented level design (lots of jumping around, hence the strong third-person mode). A mission-based story structure rounds out the design. – DOS

ACTIVISION

MechWarrior: Mercenaries

This standalone prequel to *MechWarrior 2* puts the player as an Inner Sphere Mech. There's an economy system in place, so you have to buy and manage the parts to your mech. Lose and arm, buy a new one (assuming you have the money). You can also salvage parts. – DOS, Windows

HyperBlade

This real-time multi-player futuristic sports title features vivid 3D graphics and mind-bending sound in a combination hockey, soccer, lacrosse and speed skating extravaganza. Hit 'em, hit 'em, hit 'em hard. – DOS, Windows

Interstate 76

Muscle cars of the seventies rise again in this first-person 3-D combat-simulation game. Players face off against a gang of auto mercenaries intent on destroying the U.S.'s largest oil reserve. Play one-on-one via modem, or against up to seven opponents on that huge LAN in your living room. Polish up the chicken on your Trans-Am and meet us at the strip. – Windows

Blast Chamber

Set in a rotatable 3-D cube, this game allows up to four players to challenge each other in a pressure-packed race against time. Grab a crystal and deposit it into the appropriate transmitter before the music stops, er, before a deadly time bomb strapped to your character is triggered. Looks riveting. – Windows

Time Commando

You are Stanley, virus exterminator who has been thrown into a time warp caused by a virus which has invaded a top-secret government computer. Travel through nine distinct time periods in a 3-D real-time gaming experience using the weapons of each period in an attempt to defeat foes and ultimately conquer the virus. It's polygon city. – DOS, Windows

The Elk Moon Murder

Northern Exposure writer Sam Egan and *L.A. Law*'s Amanda Donohoe – these staggering names are at the top of the promo-pages for this title which is the first in a series of role-playing mysteries. Realistic crime-solving techniques will be used to solve a brutal murder...ever play *Spycraft*? It's like that, only different. – DOS, Windows, Macintosh

Pitfall

Slated for release in 1997, this 3-D sequel to the *Pitfall* action series is a newer and glitzier *Pitfall*...kinda like the old *Pitfall* only newer...and of course, glitzier. – Windows

Planetfall

Set on Stellar Patrol of the Third Galactic Union, but marking a completely original chapter in the *Planetfall* universe, this 3-D action-adventure invites the player to uncover a conspiracy that could destroy the entire Galactic Union. Floyd (reincarnated) whistles *Turkey in the Straw* to himself while scratching. – Windows

Sacred Ground

The second title in the aforementioned series of Sam Egan scripted role-playing mysteries – another day, another brutal murder. – Windows, Macintosh

AMERICAN LASER GAMES, QQP**QQP Collections**

ALG will be releasing the *War Chest Series* and the *King's Choice Series*, "value-priced" repackagings of older QQP strategy and card games, respectively. With the closing of QQP development offices earlier this year, these will most likely be the last products released under the QQP label. – DOS

The Vampire Diaries

The next game from ALG's Her Interactive Branch, *The Vampire Diaries* is a 3-D adventure game based on a series of "romantic thriller novels for teen girls." – Windows

ANYRIVER ENTERTAINMENT**Flying Saucer**

After a friend of yours is abducted by aliens, you break into Area 51 in Nevada and steal a flying saucer. Pursued by the government and aliens alike, you must pilot the saucer in a 3D environment, do battle with aliens, abduct people and do all sorts of alien-like things. – Windows

A Fork in the Tale

It's interactive movie time, as you wake up on an island and encounter all sorts of general weirdness. It's wacky, wacky, wacky, and uses video throughout. – Windows

AVALON HILL**History of the World**

A translation of the popular Avalon Hill boardgame, *History of the World* will let you compute against up to six other players (via hotseat, modem, or e-mail play) from the time of the Sumerians up to the start of World War I. Holy wars, plague, barbarians, and disasters, this game will have all and more. Let the computer take over the accounting, and display either traditional boardgame counters or 3D figures for each empire. – Windows

Third Reich

Yes, wargamers, this game is truly creeping closer to release. A faithful recreation of their classic boardgame (the original, not the *Advanced* version), *Third Reich* puts players in the role of leader of the Axis or Allies dur-

ing WWII. Make a variety of strategic decisions, from production to diplomatic to military, in your quest to change history. Just to prove it's not vaporware the folks at Avalon Hill have released a fully playable demo that covers the first phase of the war from the invasion of Poland through the conquest of France. – DOS

Wooden Ships and Iron Men

The first significant wargame from the Age of Sail in years, gamers have had to satisfy their nautical cravings with the early demo of this game. From single ship duels to major engagements, a multitude of sailing and weaponry options, ship boardings, and a campaign game set during the War of 1812, *Wooden Ships* should heave to any month now. – DOS

World at War: Blitzkrieg

Developer Grogard Simulations will be continuing the World at War line for Avalon Hill in this release set in post D-Day Western Europe during WWII. Not a direct recreation of the old boardgame by the same name, *Blitzkrieg* (working title) is similar in that the situations it portrays will be hypothetical.

Achtung! Spitfire!

From the folks bringing you *Over the Reich*, *Spitfire* will let you re-fight the Battle of Britain. Planned for a '97 release. – Windows, Macintosh

Afrika Korps

Battle in the desert during World War II. This nearly direct translation of the boardgame is on hold for now but certainly isn't dead. – Windows, Macintosh

Over the Reich

A fine looking wargame (not a flight sim), this will let gamers experience the air war over Western Europe during WWII. A spiritual outgrowth of their earlier *Flight Commander 2*, the technical aspects have been completely reworked: better graphics, an isometric view, a broader range of missions, and more in-depth campaign play. – Windows, Macintosh

Panzer Blitz

Tactical-level combat on the Eastern Front during WWII. This translation of one of AH's best-loved boardgames should be released in early '97. – Windows

Tank Resistance 2024

A tactical-level action/strategy game that's still very early in development. Manage your forces in an isometric overview or jump into specific vehicles for simulation-like action.

BERKELEY SYSTEMS**You Don't Know Jack****Volume 2 and Sports Edition**

The 1995 surprise hit *You Don't Know Jack* is popping out at parties on a regular basis. Small wonder that we now see *Volume 2* and the *Sports Edition* soaring on the coat-tails. Welcome back, Jack. – Windows, Macintosh

Lunar Golf

Moon golf? Lunar topography and atmospheric conditions surround the player in beginner, amateur and pro levels of golf-mania as he or she steps up to the 200 foot tee, or looks

down the 3,000 yard fairway. One small putt for man, one giant drive for mankind. – Windows, Macintosh

After Dark 4.0

The next generation of *After Dark* appears this fall, complete with dueling Hula twins. Who could ask for anything more? – Windows, Macintosh

BETHESDA SOFTWARES**Skynet**

A hot little networkable, multiplayer *true* 3D action game. You can simply move any way you would in the real world in this game. Features one of the most brilliant mouse control interface ideas ever conceived for a PC-based action game. You move, you shoot, you



Diablo

A cold day in Hell

RPGers, take heart! After a long dry spell, *Diablo* looks to be a game to fill your cravings. The story line is classic RPG: a village besieged by evil emanating from the crypts and dungeons beneath its domiciles (just what is it that draws these sim-folk to build their villages above evil-infested dungeons—tax breaks?). You, and perhaps a party of friends, must descend into the dungeons to wreak vengeance on the game's Ultimate Bad Guy, Diablo. And who ever said that Ultimate Bad Guys don't have a taste for design; the graphics in this game are gorgeous: a wonderfully rendered isometric perspective with appropriately gloomy lighting effects, fully animated characters and dungeon denizens, etc. The pretty pictures are also enhanced with detailed effects (e.g., the undead skeletons clatter into a pile of bones when you van-

quish them). And once you've played a dungeon through, go back and try again; a random level generator will make certain to give you an entirely new layout.

While there's plenty of hack 'n' slash in this real-time game, role playing certainly doesn't lose out. Take on the role of either fighter, archer, or magic user, and gain experience as you go. Trips back to the village will be necessary, but not just for supplies and equipment; there'll be plenty of interaction with non-player characters in the village.

While lone gamers should thoroughly enjoy *Diablo*, the game will really come into its own in multi-player play. Blizzard continues the trend they started in *Warcraft II* by allowing spawning of multiple head-to-head copies from a single CD (i.e., not every player needs a copy). Currently designed for up to four players, the multi-player mode is very open-ended. Players in a party can decide to stick together or split up (even moving about on different levels of the dungeon!), and can cooperate in their quest or compete to be top dog (or even pull a double-cross mid-game). *Diablo* will also be the first Blizzard game to take advantage of their *battle.net* server, an over-the-internet gaming service Blizzard will be providing free of charge. —Windows

—Scott Udell



X-CAR



STARCRAFT



ALBION



ARCHIMEDEAN DYNASTY

chase, you hide. —DOS

10th Planet

The company's got a total lock on incredibly neat graphics here; imagine explosions, then secondary explosions, all in full, on-the-fly SVGA glory, running more smoothly than anything you've seen before. Imagine lighting effects that make watching your space combat look, well, *better* than most movie renditions of same. Another multiplayer, the ship control's pretty precise, too. —DOS

Daggerfall

OK. You're going to that desert isle, portable PC in hand, crank generator for electricity. You can take one game. Take this one. 400 quests. More conversational options with each NPC than you probably have with most of your co-workers. A fully-realized 3D world

you'll probably need years to explore fully. Character generation Freud would have envied. CRPG fans can bury themselves in this one and never come out for months. Ahhh, gaming heaven. —DOS

X-Car

Not tired of racing games yet? Faster and more detailed (looking, at least) than *NASCAR Racing*. More realistic speed and track realization, in full 3D motion. It drives like a real vehicle should, something you can't really say for most racing sims so far, both on-track and off. —DOS

BLIZZARD

Starcraft

With *Pax Imperia 2* under evaluation, the door is open for Blizzard to take *Warcraft*-style play out into space. Taking charge of one of three races (each with its own characteristics) you will work through an evolving storyline from the perspective of that race. Instead of conquering planets, you build "platforms" in space upon which you can erect structures; a variety of asteroids and the like will provide material for your expanding empire. —Windows

BLUE BYTE

Albion

A sci-fi/fantasy RPG with a huge 150,000 word story-line, *Albion* will appeal to gamers looking for something other than orcs, elves, and dungeons. A combination of 2D and 3D perspectives, turn-based play, an advanced auto-mapper, character and party management will satisfy those in search of a good, old-fashioned RPG. —DOS, Windows

Archimedean Dynasty

The surface destroyed, humanity has moved under the oceans for this 3D sub simulator. Great graphics provide backdrop for a realistically realized world complete with currents, dim lighting, and a variety of underwater vessels and platforms. More than just a sim, the game will also feature futuristic intrigue, plots, and politics along with character interaction, *Wing Commander*-style. —Windows

Level X

This is the working title of an as-yet-unnamed 1997 release currently takes the form of an action-based helicopter game with missions linked by a storyline. Even the early graphics look very good, and the action's a cross between *Terminal Velocity* and *Descent*.



DUNGEON KEEPER



SYNDICATE WARS



NOIR

BMG INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Firo & Klawd

Named after the two main characters (an orangutan cop from New York and a street-smart alleycat from the Bronx), this humorous 3D action shooter is due late this year.

Major League Soccer

BMG will be publishing several soccer games tied in with this U.S.-based 10 team professional league; the first game is due sometime in Spring '97.

Mass Destruction

Fight your way across 24 battlefields in this weapons-rich, overhead perspective action game. Due out in early '97.

BULLFROG

Dungeon Keeper

You must be sick of us telling you that this game will rule the known world when released. It's evolved into the weirdest resource management game. As you try to spread your particular brand of pestilence across a sunny world, you'll have to create a particularly squalid environment for the beasts to protect your life force from visiting heroes. If some of those roaches and rats start to defy you, torture them. They'll love you for it. Feel like *being* a roach? No problem, a 3D view is there for you. Feel like letting your friends in on the fun? No problem, they can be the invaders. All in all, it's still a

game of the year contender. – DOS

Syndicate Wars

The sequel to the seminal *Syndicate* will feature eight-player network play, a new 360 degree rotating view, dynamic lighting and more explosions. You still control four biomechanical agents as you try to assassinate and blow things up on your way to world domination. Sound like fun? You bet... – DOS

BUNGIE

Marathon 2

The award-winning Macintosh game comes to Windows, with high-color high resolution graphics and a hot 3D engine. A better story and more puzzles differentiates this shooter from the pack. – Windows

Marathon Infinity

The final entry in the *Marathon* saga.

– Macintosh

Pillow Fighter

This 3D fighting game is bizarre. Control psychotic postal workers (there's a concept), among others, and beat the crap out of each other. – Windows, Macintosh

CYBERDREAMS

Noir

Peering out from its *Maltese Falcon*-esque facade is this adventure whodunit that invites players to first-person their little hearts out

A SHATTERED LAND

A VILLAINOUS USURPER

A CALL FOR HEROES

Rise To The Challenge...

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amid femme fatales, fedora-wearing henchmen and callous cops, all in glorious black and white, of course. – Windows, Macintosh
Reverence

Save mankind from the apocalyptic gods of fire, earth water and air in this first person 3-D shooter. – Windows

The Incredible Shrinking Character

Also known as *The Incredible Working Title*, this third-person/flip/first person 3-D action-adventure lures the player into drinking a mysterious potion (*forces* the player might be a better take on the situation) after which he begins to (incredibly, gulp) shrink.

– Windows, Macintosh

CYBERFLIX

Titanic: Adventure Out of Time

It's stunning. The ship in which this new interactive saga has been set has been crafted during the course of the last two years from original plans, blueprints and photographs. Explore the doomed vessel and match wits with over 25 interactive characters. With any luck, you shouldn't sink.

– Windows, Macintosh

DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE

The Neverhood:

A Curious Wad of Klay Finds His Soul

Doug TenNapel of *Earthworm Jim* fame has

created this animated clay CD-ROM adventure that turned out to be one of the highlights of the show. As Klaymen, the floppy limbed hero (ducklike to say the least), players seek to defeat the evil Klogg and discover the meaning of life. We imagine that the former is more of a given. – Windows

EA SPORTS

Madden 96

Perhaps not the hard-core simulation that others claim to be, *Madden* has the advantage of looking and playing better than most of its competitors. Play calling is incredibly simple (though the plays themselves are not), and the Madden University is a useful learning tool for those who are not football experts. – DOS

NHL 97

This was being shown behind closed doors, but EA is finally going polygonal with the latest version of their top-selling hockey sim. One of the biggest criticisms of the new high-resolution graphics was that the characters started to look bad. No more. They now look fantastic, even early in development, with more realistic animation and more variety to their movement. The same technology will be present in the future *NBA Live 97*, and *FIFA 97*. – DOS, Windows

Triple Play 97

It's about time. EA hasn't done a baseball game



REVERENCE



TITANIC



THE NEVERHOOD

HEROES of Might and Magic III

THE SUCCESSION WARS



since the disastrous *Earl Weaver Baseball 2.0*. You get real players and real teams, rendered stadiums, and there's a Home Run Derby for those who can't get enough of the long-ball. They promise real physics, drafts, play-by-play, loads of stats. The Windows version will include six player multiplayer mode (six?), modem play, an on-the-fly manager mode and three batting and fielding views. – DOS, Windows

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

Terracide

The merger of Domark, US Gold and Eidos PLC has resulted in this company. *Terracide* their latest Sci-Sim combat game, with high-



TERRACIDE



TOMB RAIDER



ROAD RASH



7TH LEGION

resolution, high color graphics for those with 3D accelerator cards. Stop the alien named Berserker by doing battle with scads of aliens. – DOS, Windows

AH-64A

You'd think that Bryan Walker, ex-AH-64 Apache pilot and Desert Storm veteran, could design a quality chopper sim. Here's the test. The emphasis will be on hard-core realism, with spiffy 3D graphics and multiplayer play rounding out the features. More to come at a later date... – Windows, Macintosh

Tomb Raider

In a change of pace, control a gun-wielding woman in this 3D action-adventure game. The characters are all polygons, and overall the visuals look quite good. With a puzzles within the mayhem, this may be worth looking out for if you're into this sort of thing. – DOS

Flying Nightmares 2: Semper Fi

Control the Harrier Jump Jet and the Cobra Attack Helicopter in this sequel to the Mac-only game. High-resolution graphics and multiplayer action rounds out the feature list. – Windows, Macintosh

Deathtrap Dungeon

Is this an example of where the CRPG is headed? This 3D game has exploration and puzzle solving combined with fighting-game style combat. – DOS, Windows, Macintosh

Real Trouble

Bud Tucker is the world's first pizza delivery guy/lab assistant/savior of the known world in this graphic adventure. – DOS, Windows

Confirmed Kill

Kill people on the Total Entertainment Network in this long-awaited online flight simulator. – DOS, Macintosh

Incredible Hulk

It's a fighting game. With 14 levels. And a big green guy. In 3D. – DOS

Machinehead

Not to be confused with that lame Bush song, this 3D shooter has players blasting through levels to save the world from a virus. – DOS

Olympic Summer Games

To coincide with the games in Atlanta, this game will be released alongside *Olympic Soccer*. *Summer Games* has track and field, swimming, fencing, archery and other games. – DOS

Steel Legions

Multinational corporations from Earth are in search of new things to own, so they go to war with each other with giant robots. Strategy elements are present, but they shouldn't overwhelm that action... – Windows

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Road Rash

This is a motorcycle racing game (developed by Papyrus) where you can punch and kick fellow riders. Multiplayer play and music from Soundgarden, Paw, Swervedriver, Therapy?, Monster Magnet and Hammerbox round out the features. – Windows

The Need for Speed: Special Edition

Two new tracks, an in-game map, 12 new music tracks and multiplayer play equals a

special edition. Remember that. We'll be quizzing you later. – DOS, Windows

EMPIRE

The Art of Golf

This detailed golf sim stands out from the crowd with its "Mousedrive" technique, a way of using mouse movement to simulate the swing. Tutorials, multiplayer play, handicapping, SGI-rendered graphics and the Jack Nicklaus course at St. Mellion in England should provide a full golf game. – DOS

The Civil War: Master Player's Edition

A reworking of *The Civil War: 1861-1864*, the *Master Player's Edition* adds new historical battles (including Antietam and Fredericksburg), completely reworks graphics, addresses a major complaint against the original with improved AI for both campaign and battle modes, and tosses in a bonus strategy guide. – DOS

Flying Corps

A sequel to their WW I flight sim *Dawn Patrol*, this game adds four new campaigns; a new game engine with 32,000 color modes, SVGA graphics, clouds, and contoured landscape; a new flight model for all the aircraft in the game; a historic database; and new eye and ear candy through full motion video and stereo sound. – DOS

Terry Bradshaw Fantasy Football

Based on FSPI's *Franchise Football League* software, this 1996 version will let players take on the role of a team franchise "owner," setting up season-long fantasy leagues, holding virtual drafts of actual players, and generally immersing themselves in the big-business/big-sports world of professional football. – DOS, Windows

Solid Ice

This is the working title of an upcoming hockey game that empire had just signed before the show. – DOS

EPIC MEGAGAMES

7th Legion

Epic's answer to real-time strategy games, and most notably, *Command & Conquer*. Their version features giant robots, gorgeously rendered and in high resolution, in addition to buildings and infantry. – Windows

Curly's Adventure

Here's a rare treat—a shareware graphic adventure. This one takes place in an insane asylum and, as you might guess, the overall theme is irreverent comedy. – Windows

Jazz Jackrabbit 2

Jazz's brother Spazz joins him in this sequel to his first game. Like the first Jazz, this is a platform game, but this time out it allows multiplayer gaming. With eight level parallax scrolling and, we're told, up to 70 frames per second on a Pentium, *Jazz Jackrabbit 2* may end up being the kingpin of platform games. – Windows

World of Wonders

Turn based strategy in a classic pseudo-medieval RPG world. Much like New World's *Heroes of Might and Magic*, but with a more in-depth combat system. – Windows

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Reader Service No. 102

Unreal

Epic goes gunning for Quake with a 3D engine that lives up to its name

One of the strengths of shareware developers is their ability to react quickly to changes in the marketplace. For example, *Unreal* will be one of the first games to support Intel's MMX Pentium technology. This 3D first-person game puts most, if not all, others to shame. If you have an MMX processor, you can run this game in 640x480x16.7 million colors. *Unreal* is built for multi-



player gaming, and you can set up an *Unreal* server on the Web and invite your buddies in for some mayhem. Better yet, you can set up teleporters which will take you from one web server to another. "To what end?" you ask. Well, *Unreal* will ship with *UnrealEd*, a world editing tool. With this more or less object oriented tool, you can build your own world from the ground up, then link it to others on the web. *UnrealEd* is an incredibly powerful and fairly easy to use tool which deserves much more space than we can give it here. Stay tuned. This engine is hot.

— Windows

— Peter Smith



The Simpsons: Virtual Springfield

Springfield comes to life in this 3D rendition of the popular Matt Groening world. All the voice actors from the show lend their talents, as you stop in at Moe's for a cold one or work the nuke plant controls at Homer's desk.

— Windows, Macintosh

The X Files

A '97 game still very early in development, we're told this title will feature a script by Chris Carter, FMV shot just for the game and it will, of course, star David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson. — Windows, Macintosh

GAMETEK

Emperor of the Fading Suns

Previewed last month, *Emperor* is a space empire builder being built around the detailed *Fading Suns* universe, a world being designed by experienced paper role playing game creators. — Windows

Abduction

A sci-fi adventure wherein you are abducted by aliens and placed into cryo-storage, only to awaken 600 years later to find yourself in an abandoned ship that's about to go blooey. Escape, or die. — DOS

Alien Incident

You're there when, on Halloween eve, your uncle attempts to test out his new "wormhole spawner" invention only to have it be struck by lightning, opening an unplanned hole to another dimension. Aliens come through and take your uncle. It's up to you to defeat the aliens and rescue the ol' fogie. — DOS

AYSO Soccer '96: World Challenge

Master the local and regional action, earn the

title of national champion, and go on to take on any team in the world. — DOS

Fly Fishing

All the challenges, none of the smell. — Windows

Net: Zone

Explore cyberspace in an effort to rescue your father, whose body is in all likelihood dead but whose mind continues to exist in the top-secret CYCORP facilities. Explore this 3D world with a variety of metaphoric "vehicles."

Soul Hunt

An obsessed professor, ancient occult rituals, and a search for missing friends all come together in this action/adventure. A variety of 3D driving and walking action through plenty of eye-pleasing terrain and architecture.

Surface Tension

Teleport to different planetoids scattered about the solar system in search of a rare vaccine needed to save Earth in this 3-D space combat sim. — DOS, Windows

GROLIER INTERACTIVE

Battle of the Ironclads

Re-create the famous Civil War "Battle of the Ironclads" *USS Monitor* and *CSS Virginia* (the *Merrimack*) in this detailed naval simulation. Options, difficulty levels, and alternative scenarios will add life to the game, and extensive research, video, and music will help set the atmosphere. — Windows

Banzai Bug!

Join Banzai and his friends in this flight sim as they attempt to collect materials for a "Stinkulator" they hope to use to rid a house of its human occupants. — Windows



FOX INTERACTIVE

Die Hard Trilogy

It's three, three, three games in one. An over-the-shoulder 3D action game, a *Virtua Cop* style shooting game and a frantic race through the streets of New York driving game. Each game is heavy on blood and action, light on strategy. — Windows

Aliens vs. Predator

Take on the role of an Alien defending its hive, the Predator, or a hapless human marine. — Windows

Independence Day

Basically a 3D flying shooter but you have enemies on the ground below as well as enemies shooting at you from the gigantic mother ship you're flying under. — Windows

Surf and Destroy

A real-time action/adventure that Grolier likens to "Ghostbusters in cyberspace." Stop the virus unleashed on the world by Rood O'Dor, yet another evil genius who at least has a sense of humor. – Windows

GT INTERACTIVE

9

This graphic adventure is from Tribeca Interactive, a company founded by Robert DeNiro. Thurston Last has just died, and it will be up to you to find his nine artistic muses in order to restore his house to its original grandeur. Pretentious as hell... – Windows, Macintosh



TIMELAPSE



HARD BOILED



ADVENTURES OF THE SMART PATROL



SQUEEZILS

Bedlam

This game looks so much like Domark's *Total Mayhem* that you have to wonder... Well, you can blow more stuff up in this one, as you guide your three robots through isometric 3D environments. – DOS, Macintosh

We Are Not Alone

First-person action is combined with puzzle solving as you try to find your way through 24 alien bases in search of your fiancée. – DOS, Windows

Vampire: The Masquerade

The role-playing game comes to the PC. You're a powerful young vampire in New York who's been accused of murdering a fellow vampire. You must prove your innocence was you avoid the vampire gangs. – DOS

Viper

It's 3D shooter time as you pilot your craft of pretty terrain. Not to be confused with Ocean's game of the same name (or maybe it is – these things all look alike). *Harrier 2020* is another, with 12 player network play. Finally, we have *Tigershark*, which is a, gasp, 3D shooter. Or maybe you'd prefer *Rebel Moon Rising*, an, uh, 3D shooter. – Windows

GTE ENTERTAINMENT

TimeLapse

This visually stunning game, with full-screen ray-traced graphics, takes the player on a journey through time and space to find a missing archaeologist and discover a link between the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Maya, Anasazi, Easter Island and Atlantis. – Windows, Macintosh

Hard Boiled

This 3D shooter is inspired by the Dark Horse Comic created by Frank Miller and Geof Darrow. – Windows

Siege

This is the working title of a game that will be a multiplayer game with linked gameplay elements to a monthly comic book. It will also launch GTE's online network for multiplayer gaming. While the notion of another 3D action-adventure won't raise any eyebrows, the possibility of monthly updates to the gameplay and story (via download) is intriguing.

I-MOTION

Stardisk

Presenting a CD-ROM based on-or-off-the-Net activity – it's hard to know what to expect when the government is involved. It's insanity. Say nothing...and prepare for the men in black. – Windows

Solar Crusade

In this sequel to *Chaos Control* you are fearless Jessica Darkhill who fights for humanity and the very existence of the universe. It's billed as a sci-fi high-flying action-adventure which you may play alone or head-to-head, in the den or in your bed. – Windows

ID SOFTWARE

Quake

Jay Wilbur, Biz-dude for id, said that *Quake* will be out in 60 days, which puts a release

right around the end of July. We can only wait... Haven't heard of it, you say? It's just the next game from those guys who made *Doom* a household word. Haven't heard of *Doom*, you say? Erm, where you been? – DOS, Macintosh

INSCAPE

Devo Presents Adventures of the Smart Patrol

Since you've been avidly waiting for a game titled "Devo Presents *anything*," your patience has finally been rewarded. Yes it really is...a role-playing adventure game in surrealistic social satire. Save Spudland from Osso Buco Myelitis. – Windows

Assassin - 2015

Jack Butcher is *you*, er, vice versa in this 3-D first-person futuristic scenario. Brandish buckets of brawn as a government controlled assassin hoping to escape with your life. – Windows

Ravage

As the only surviving member of a small rebel force, it's up to you to travel to the various dimensions enslaved by that dimension traveling vermin slime, the Necron.

Compelling action-game feature? – Windows

Safecracker

This adventure/puzzle game challenges you in the role of a top security expert to break into your new employer's residence and open the master safe. Of course, it's the 30 billion OTHER safes that hold the clues to its location and combination. – Windows, Macintosh

Squeezils

This one is billed as the best flying squirrel game of all time. Is it the only flying squirrel game of all time? Arcade action abounds and there's something compelling about the Squeezil character we saw – an endearingly wicked gleam in his eye. – Windows

Drowned God

In this role-playing adventure game, players are entangled in an alien conspiracy to distort the origins of mankind. Big Bang or no Big Bang, that is the question. Whether tis nobler to feature an on-line component to link game play to content located on the Web...who knows? – Windows, Macintosh

The Egyptian Jukebox

Players explore the drawers of a clue-filled jukebox in hopes of unraveling the puzzling disappearance of eccentric millionaire Hamilton Hasp. A dense atmosphere of drawers and sound and music. Drawers, ten of 'em, yep. – Windows Macintosh

INTERACTIVE MAGIC

American Civil War:

From Sumter to Appomattox

For those of use who missed the game *From Sumter to Appomattox* the first two times around, I-Magic is working to make certain the third time will be the charm. This strategic-level game of the Civil War is getting a whole new look, with both graphics and much needed interface improvements to make it more accessible to the rest of us. – Windows

Bruce Jenner's World Class Decathlon

Being touted by the Olympic legend himself, *Decathlon* will certainly get you into the spirit of the Olympics. Take on the role of one of

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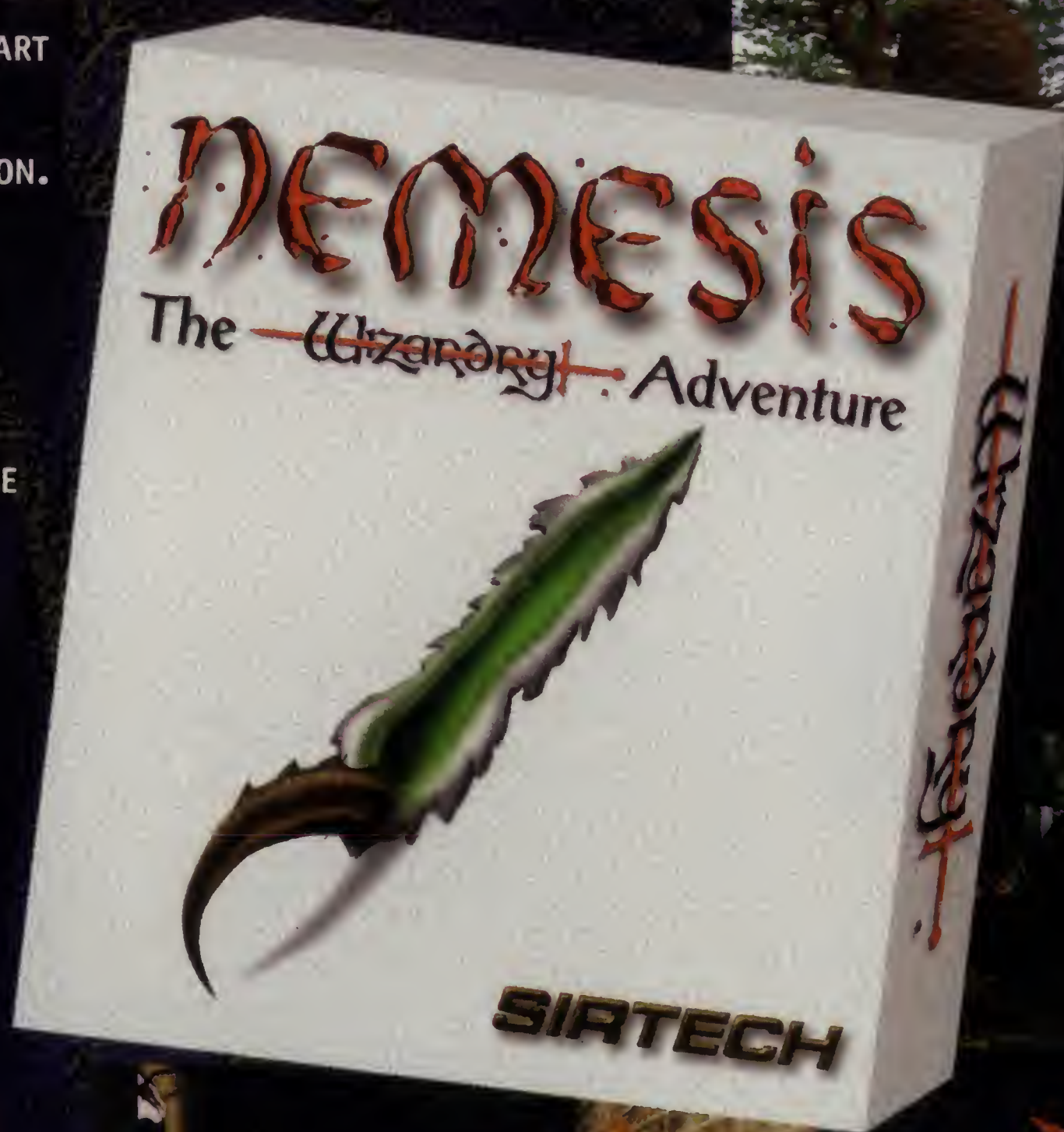
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iM1A2

Finally, the successor to MI Tank Platoon

Arnold Hendrick is apparently kibbitzing mightily on this effort from outside developers Charybdis, who are based in Texas (and at least one of whom is rumored to be yet another Origin renegade). Bill Stealey remains madly in love with the idea of a full-scale, effectively tactical tank simulation (as do most of us sim-heads), so this one's a guaranteed show. Emphasis is on all the things gamers love most, with extra emphasis added beyond that on paying attention to, say, real-world military tactical doctrine for both US and non-US forces for each scenario. The developers have studied such doctrine and implemented it in their scenario and engine design in detail.

Players will be able to operate from a single tank, a platoon, or an entire company, calling in air and ground support as a mission progresses. The screen is organized intelligently, so that moving from position to position in the tank won't require the whole-scale perceptual/conceptual shift that's plagued such attempts in the past – the relationships between driving and gunnery are made clear, in other words, so you



don't lose track of where you're going or where you're aiming from either position.

Battles can be fought individually, or linked together for campaigns (in the latter case, success or lack of it in one mission influences the next mission in the campaign); the initial theatres will include the Persian Gulf, the Balkans and the Ukraine.

Grogards will of course say iM1A2 is all wrong no matter what the designers do; the rest of us will enjoy insanely. – Windows

—Steve Wartofsky

eight athletes from around the world as you work your way through the ten events of the decathlon. – Windows

Destiny

Take your civilization from the Stone Age through to the Space Age, but you'll do it differently than other civ-building games. Take a more peaceful scientific track or go for full out military conquest. You can even jump into a 3-D rendering of various portions of your universe to get a first-hand view of the life of your people. – Windows

Air Warrior II

Will on-line multi-player ever take off and become the addiction for the masses it has obviously become for the few and the freaky? This title will be there to prove you can actually have fun with same in air combat if you keep your focus and listen to your users. Practice with this at home before you lose your bank account to an on-line addiction. – DOS

F-16 Fighting Falcon

This flight sim portrays the F-16C in all its high-tech glory. Beginning pilots can play in a simplified "arcade" mode, or experienced sim pilots can crank up the realistic details. Beautiful graphics, an advanced flight model, and network play should all help flesh out this sim. – DOS

F22

No. We're not supposed to say much about this yet. We won't. It looks fantastic. Real-world terrain, based on real-world data. Being developed internally at I-Magic, by some local talent (not tobacco farmers, we're assured). Is it networkable? Is it totally realistic? Is it fun? Stay tuned...

INTERPLAY

Star Trek: Star Fleet Academy

You've always wanted to be Kirk, right? Here's your chance. With many years of development behind it, this game allows the player to finally fly the Enterprise against 30 other alien ships. The game starts by placing the player in Starfleet headquarters in San Francisco. You must complete 27 missions in order to become a Star Fleet officer. Some of the teachers include Kirk, Chekov and Sulu, played by William Shatner, Walter Koenig and George Takei respectively. Combat sequences pit the player against ships ranging from a cloaked Klingon Bird of Prey to a Romulan Heavy Cruiser. Visually, the game uses high-resolution graphics and full-motion video to make the player think they're in the *Star Trek* universe. – DOS, Windows

Die by the Sword

Using advanced polygonal characters (but no motion-capture – animation is rendered mathematically), this 3D fighting game is hilariously violent. You can lop off arms and legs (watching a character hop around after you've cut off a leg is worth the price of admission alone) as you try to advance through the multiple levels of the game and fight all 25 of the characters. You can create your own moves, there are multiple weapons available, and network play is present. Definitely the best PC fighting game at the



DECATHLON



STAR FLEET ACADEMY



M.A.X.



WATERWORLD

show. – DOS, Windows

M.A.X.: Mechanized Assault & Exploration

This strategy game features simultaneous movement and customizable vehicles as you try to conquer a post-nuclear world. Top-down SVGA graphics, 3D rendered models, and 16-bit sound are some of the highlights of this interesting looking game. Multiplayer support, of course, is also present. – DOS

Waterworld: The Quest for Dryland

22 missions pit the player against the Smokers, Laymen, Organos and Choppers as you try to survive and find the dryland. The missions will feature scenes from the movie, which could frighten most people, but the gameplay looks strong, with many weapons and vehicles to choose from. – DOS



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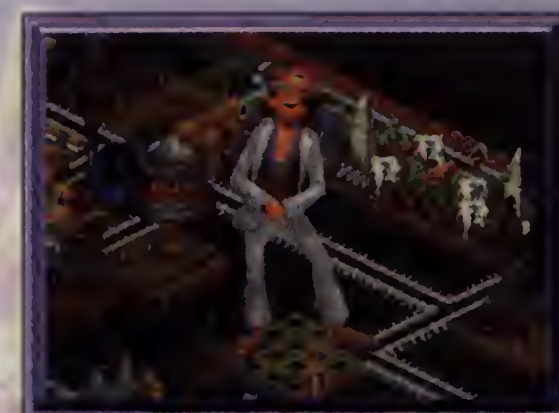
and Hell, zone in blocks of Sins or Virtues and build roads. Soon, the dearly departed arrive in droves. Keep them happy and you flourish. Lose too many and it's a visit from the Four Surfers of the Apocalypse. Add a half-dozen disasters, money problems, lost souls, headaches on the planet below, and things get complicated quick. With over 200 artistically rendered rewards, nearly 300 detailed tiles and buildings, and more maps, graphs and charts than you can shake a pitchfork at, you're in for infinite hours of game-play.



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WINDOWS 95, DOS & MACINTOSH CD-ROM

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Fragile Allegiance

It's yet more real-time strategy as you try to conquest alien planets. Explore, expand and fight off any alien invasions. Multiplayer play is available, as is a built-in e-mail messaging system. – DOS

Blood & Magic

You're probably not going to believe this, but this is a real-time strategy game. No kidding. Using 28 characters from the AD&D *Forgotten Realms* universe, you must conquer your opponents and capture their homeland. – DOS

Dragon Dice

This strategy game is based on the dice game from TSR. It comes with all 112 dice from the game, including five wizard dice. Each die possesses specific strength and magic, and it's up to the player to figure out how to use them as they attempt to take over worlds. – Windows

Realms of the Haunting

From Gremlin comes this adventure with slick 3D graphics. With a *Doom*-style interface, players navigate around a small town in England trying to ward off impending doom. – DOS

Descent to Undermountain

The *Descent* engine goes underground in this action/RPG. Multiplayer action is supported, and jumping to the map still shows a small first-person window, so no one can make a sneak-attack on you while you try and find your way around. – DOS

Shattered Steel

This battling 'bots game features high resolution fractal landscapes for the player to muck around in. There are 70 missions, over 50 enemies, 30 weapons and will support 16 player network play. Yikes. – DOS

Of Light & Darkness

Visually speaking, this is a stunning game. The art is by renowned French surrealist Gil Bruvel, who's given the game a truly wondrous look. The player is sucked into a painting and must discover their way out as they encounter a series of weird characters. You must discover your sister, who was also sucked into the painting, and figure how to get the hell outta there. – Windows

Mummy: Tomb of the Pharaoh

With the ubiquitous Malcolm McDowell, this game takes the player on an adventure through the pyramids in Egypt. – Windows

Shadoan

The five part *Kingdom* series A family title continuing the adventures of hero Lathan Kandor, *Shadoan* offers cartoon animation and even features a potential hit song (oh, those potential hits...). – DOS, Macintosh

INTRACORP/CAPSTONE/360

Hammer's Slammers

Based on the novels by David Drake, this futuristic strategy game puts you in charge of the Slammers in a variety of battles or campaigns. A turn-based game played out over a hexless map, 360 also plans to allow you to check out the situation in 3D through the eyes of your scouts. Multiple play modes (LAN, modem, Internet, etc.), a detailed data-

base, and a built-in editor will round out the package. – Windows, Macintosh

V for Victory 2: The Pacific Campaign

Taking the well-known wargame series to a strategic level, *Pacific Campaign* sounds like a monster that wargame *grognards* will love. Control military operations down to the battalion (!), task force, and squadron level as well as resource management and industrial production at a national level. The intelligence model in the game will even portray the "Magic" code-breaking capabilities of the U.S. Unfortunately, we'll have to wait until '97 for this one. – Windows

Harpoon II Admiral's Edition

A complete compilation for *Harpoon II* buffs, this package's biggest draw is the Database Editor, which lets you design new platforms, facilities, or installations. Also new for the package are *BattleSet 5: Regional Conflicts 2* (covering the Middle East) and the winning entries from their Scenario Design Contest. – DOS

Soul Keeper

Based on the novel *Crystal Skull* by Rob MacGregor, this Indiana Jones-ish first-person "adventure mystery" will find you working your way through dangerous Mayan ruins in an attempt to keep the Crystal Skull from the bad guys. – Windows

Blood Hockey

A first-person hockey game that will let you become one with the ice... or the puck, or the wallboard, or your fellow players. Compete against the computer or up to twelve humans in network play. Other hockey game standards like instant replays, rink eye candy, and personal and team stats will just add the icing to the cake. – DOS

Corridor 8: Galactic Wars

The sequel to *Corridor 7*, *Corridor 8* will get a facelift through 3D Realms' *Build* engine. Choose from fifteen different characters (either allied or enemy) and take them on up to 30 different missions. Another blaster on the way is *Fate*. – DOS

KONAMI

Riana Rouge

An abused secretary turns into a butt-kicking, leather-fetishist, April 1996 Playboy Playmate of the Month in this, uh, role-playing game (no, really). An "adult" version will feature violence and "sensuous" encounters between Riana and various hunky dudes, while a "teen" version will be the one no one buys. – Windows

LEGEND ENTERTAINMENT

Callahan's Crosstime Saloon

Designer Josh Mandel, one of the funniest and most talentless (er, that's talentED) guys in the industry, goes for the laugh but shows a sensitive side in this humorous but bitter-sweet adventure based on author Spider Robinson's seven *Callahan's Crosstime Saloon* books. From the streets of Transylvania to the shores of Tripoli, players will wax episodic in this witty and poignant look at humanity through that which is beyond human. We're betting on this one. – DOS, Windows



DRAGON DICE



REALMS OF THE HAUNTING



SHATTERED STEEL



FATE

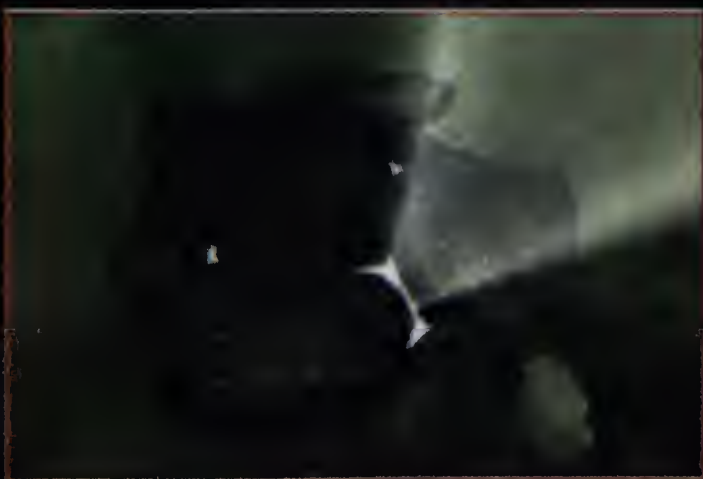
The Moon is a Harsh Mistress

Legend's Bob Bates announces the acquisition of the license to Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, for which writer/designer Bruce Balfour has been contracted. One pre-production wanna-do involves a pre-plot evolution of Mike the Robot using a child's voice which will eventually mature into our "fully grown" cyber-friend.

LUCAS ARTS

Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II

This title continues the story of Kyle Katarn, young mercenary sent to infiltrate the Empire. More than a dozen multi-level mazes are available as single or multiple players face powerful enemies and once again fight for the Rebel cause. – Window 95, Macintosh



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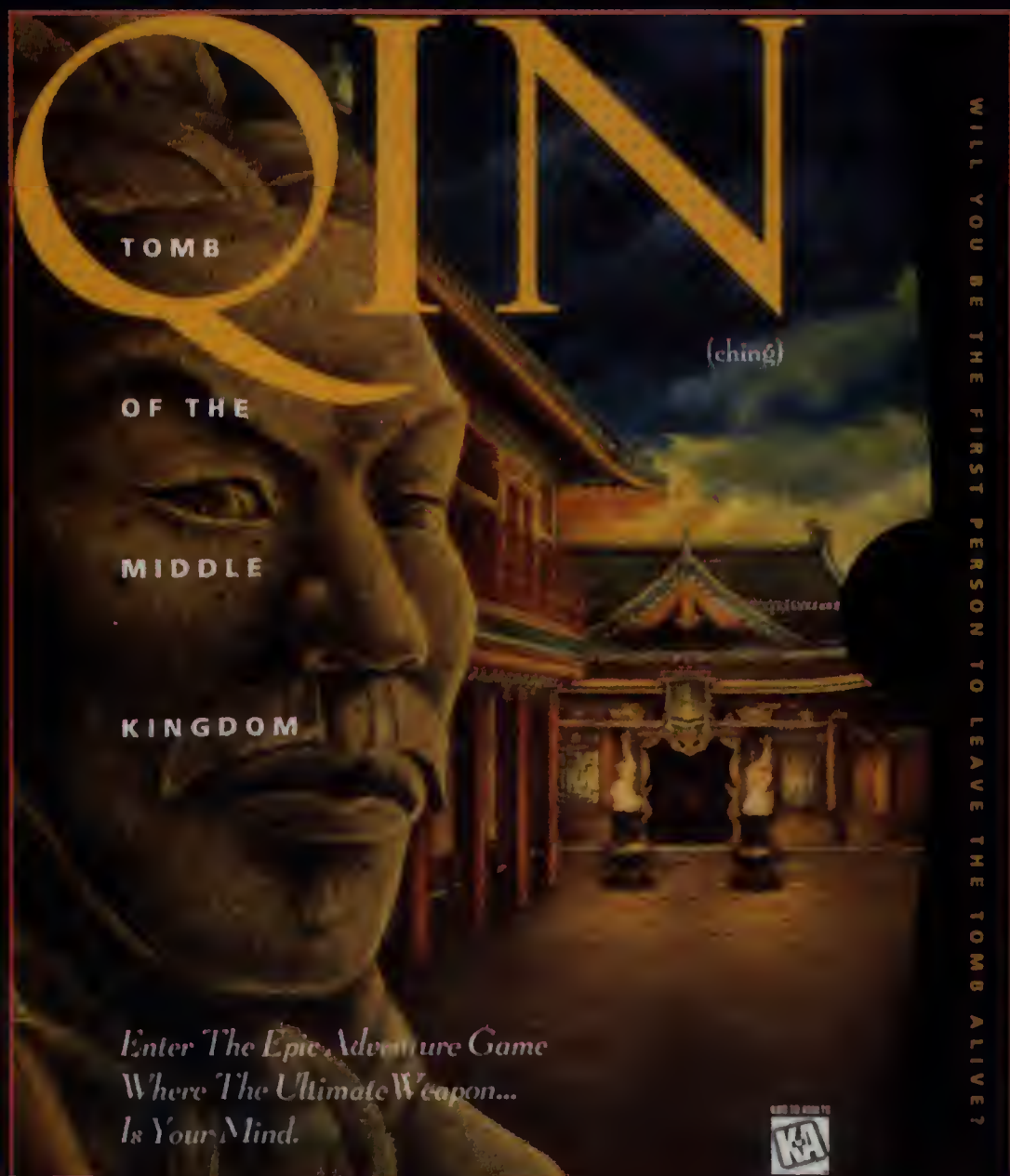
"Indiana Jones meets *Myst*."

—STEVEN GREENLEE,
COMPUTER GAME REVIEW

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Falcon 4.0

Gilman Louie talks about the future of EBS

The rumors were right. Spectrum HoloByte is dead. Well, not really, but the company will no longer release games under the name Spectrum HoloByte, instead releasing all titles under the MicroProse brand. But on to the biggest of the Spectrum games, the venerable *Falcon*.

In many ways, *Falcon 4.0* is Gilman Louie's dream brought to the next generation; it not only realizes his earliest ambitions to put together a focused, in-depth F-16 simulation, but provides the springboard for what may finally be the full realization of the dream of the Electronic Battlefield.

Louie was on-hand at E3 for a meeting, and was more than glad to enthuse about the future of EBS (the Electronic Battlefield Series, an idea originally planned for *Falcon 3.0* but never pulled off). One of the strong points of the company's plans to put together EBS is that the code for each of the independent simulations – be it for the F-16 in the case of *Falcon 4.0*, or for the ground combat units in the simulation being worked on for same, or for the close-air support simulation (the trickiest, since it has to move between the widest variations of texel design between close-up ground and up-high air representations) that would logically be next in line – is being developed for the most part by independent teams; yet the code linking all the separate simulations for the larger-scale tactical/strategic engine is consistent across the board. The basic battlefield engine, in other words, is a component which the designers plan to have shared across simulations; but the simulations themselves are meant to function entirely as discrete entities unto themselves.

This guarantees that we won't be seeing piles of "a lot like *Falcon 4.0*, only different" simulations arriving soon after the first simulation's eventual release (plans are now for 1997 – early 1997, at least); Louie – and by inference, the company – is committed to maintaining the integrity and independence of every effort to provide realistic simu-



lation of a particular unit – plane, tank or whatever; this may take longer, but it means gamers won't ever feel like they've been tricked into buying the same product over again with new paint. Far from it.

As to *Falcon 4.0* itself? With 3D acceleration hardware, what's already visible is simply astounding. The terrain is as realistic as it comes, the flight performance is simply incomparable with anything else ever seen on a PC, the management of situational awareness is brilliant, combining the best of a number of previous ideas into a system as simple and elegant as it is functional, the cockpit instrumentation is full-scale yet highly flexible in configuration for player preference – in short, *Falcon 4.0* is already, in its early pre-alpha stages, a sim you'd want *right now*. We can't even begin to imagine how good it'll be come next year this time. 1996 is going to be a looong year for air combat enthusiasts... – Windows

—Steve Wartofsky

Outlaws

Three complete game variations add versatility to this strategic action-adventure with an option for network play. You're an ol' cowhand... howdy pardner... yippee-aiyo-kai-ay... get along, li'l dogie ...you get the picture.

– Windows, Macintosh

X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter

The battle between the Empire and the Rebel Alliance continues in this single or multiplayer space combat simulation. More than fifteen missions set in familiar *Star Wars* environments challenge the player to engage in deep space dogfights. If looks could predict gameplay, this might be one amazing product.

– Windows

M.G.M. INTERACTIVE

Cyberthug

It's a 3-D Action Shooter! Yawn? End of story? Not quite. Cyberthug's right arm morphs into seven weapons as he battles some of the most bizarre villains ever to hit the Net. We see cross-dressing federal agents with mascara, straight (?) out of *La Cage aux Femmes*, net static represented by jackasses on skateboards and government lobbyists represented as headless suits. All in all, *Cyberthug* looks like something for which to prop open an eyelid (use hot glue). – Windows

H.O.S.T.

This is an arcade-style, top-down shooter that allows multiple players to battle it out via a



OUTLAWS



CYBERTHUG



SIM COPTER



SIM GOLF

LAN or over the Internet. Save the earth. Why not? Everyone *else* is. – Windows

The Outer Limits

This 3D adventure brings the player through the darkest corners of an ever-expanding virtual universe to battle renegade androids and (guess what?) save humankind. Choose your avatar, play for months...or until you bottom out your credit cards. – Windows

MAXIS

SimCopter

Not a detailed chopper simulator, this game will let you take the controls of a civilian helicopter and fly it through a variety of virtual 3D cities (either those included with the game or built by players in *SimCity 2000*) on differ-



MAGIC THE GATHERING



AGENTS OF JUSTICE



EUROPEAN AIR WAR



GRAND PRIX 2

ent missions—helping police chase criminals or control riots, fighting fires with the fire department, or rescuing Sims from dangerous situations. You can even land your chopper and walk the Simstreets. — Windows

SimGolf

SimGolf adds its own twists to the golf genre, especially in its very advanced golf course builder (with courses and tutorials by “world-renowned course designer Robert Trent Jones, Jr.”). Full 3D movement across the course will be appreciated by gamers, as will the LAN, modem and Internet play.

— Windows

SimPark

Build parks ranging from city parks to “untamed wilderness,” populate them with all

MICROSOFT Age of Empires

A new civilization emerges

Does anyone remember a guy named Bruce Shelley? He co-designed a couple of decent games a few years ago for a company called MicroProse. Those games were *Railroad Tycoon* and *Civilization*. When his new company, Ensemble Studios, called us last year to tell us that they were working on a strategy game, we bit our lips with anticipation. Here's that game. It spans tens of thousands of years, as the player attempts to turn a small Ice Age tribe into a great civilization.

Multiplayer play will be included from the outset; the game will also be operating in real-time. The player will control tribe members, to hunt, explore, conquer, and build, and technology will evolve constantly as time passes. Opposing tribes will be discovered, and the player can choose to make peace and trade or attack, on land or sea.

The comparisons to *Civilization* will be unavoidable, though it looks as if the scale on this one is slightly smaller (and the graphics are much better). An



example of the detail planned was shown on the trade show floor when, during the dawn of a civilization, tribe members were sent out to hunt for food. The little guy grabbed a spear and started chucking it at the deer in the area. One was hit, fell down, and the guy walked up and started hacking at it with a bladed weapon. After a few seconds, he emerged with a slab of beef, which he then proceeded to drop off at the camp. Excellent. The only downside here is that it won't be available until 1997. —Steve Bauman

kinds of plants and animals, and let the park go. Learn plant and animal identification techniques in the process. As a ranger, you will be in charge of maintaining your park's ecosystem—put in all rabbits and no predators and you'll soon be awash in bunnies. You can even mix in humans and their facilities, but remember — don't feed the animals. — Windows, Macintosh

Mind Warp

Still very early in development, this will be a 3D shooter “done the Maxis way. Maxis says their new 3D engine will be quick and smooth without heavy hardware requirements. — Windows, Macintosh

SimCity 2000 Network Edition

Via LAN, modem, or Internet you can join friends in a city-building experience. Players must agree on trading city resources and vote on ordinances. The aim is to control the most land by the end of the game, but players will need to cooperate to make the city grow or no one will do well. — Windows

MICROPROSE

Magic The Gathering

The computer version of the now-famous collectible card game is looking very sharp. Play either within a campaign-like adventure mode designed by Sid Meier or jump right in to Duel Mode to fight it out against either custom decks or theme-based decks supplied with the game. On-line play will not ship with this version but will be added sometime in the future. — Windows

Agents of Justice

Picture *X-COM* meets the *X-Men* and you get an idea of the style of play in this newest title from subsidiary SimTex (developers of *MOO* and *MOM*). Lead your teams of super heroes in a series of missions against the forces of evil, culminating in a battle against an Ultimate Bad Guy intent on the destruction and/or enslaving of humanity (take your pick). — DOS, Windows

European Air War

Taking the engine from *Pacific Air War* and moving it from the Orient to the Occident, *European Air War* will focus on the fight for air superiority over Europe during the Battle of Britain and the Western front fighting from 1943 to 1945 (hmmm, wasn't the “Battle of Britain” air campaign fought in 1942?). The original *PAW* engine has been enhanced with improved frame rates, graphics, and artificial intelligence. — DOS

Grand Prix II

The follow-up to the popular racing game takes players to tracks in Monaco, Brazil, and France. You'll get full pitching and rolling, crashes, blown engines, even trackside sponsor advertising. — DOS

Master of Orion II: Battle at Antares

What more can we say after last month's cover story? This update to the classic space empire sim tweaks a lot, prettifies a lot, and adds more technologies, more races (and a design-your-own capability), multiplayer options and floating blue heads in space. — DOS

Star Trek Generations

Gaming meets *Trek* in this combination 3D *Doom*-like, space sim, strategy game based on the movie. Strategize against Soran in Stellar Cartography, fight out space battles in tactical encounters, and take on the form of crew members as they are sent on first person-perspective missions.

– Windows

Vette: San Francisco Thrills

Choose from seven Corvette models to take on a spin through the streets of old San Francisco. Whip past familiar landmarks as you avoid the police, pedestrians, and your competition (via the judicious use of shortcuts). – Windows



MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS



HELLBENDER



MICROSOFT SOCCER



DARK EARTH

X-COM: Apocalypse

The third in the extremely popular series, this game departs from the first two in both looks and play. Set several decades after the end of the *Terror from the Deep*, this game focuses in on a specific alien threat to a key metropolitan area. Graphics have been completely reworked and pumped up to the SVGA level, and game-play can be *either* real-time or turn-based; unfortunately we won't be seeing this one until sometime in the first half of '97. – DOS

MICROSOFT

Close Combat

Readers should know all about this baby, from its days back as *Beyond Squad Leader* to its cover story on this magazine in May. Players find themselves at Normandy on D-Day as they enter into battles with soldiers whose specific personalities are being modeled. Motivation and leadership will have an enormous impact on players throughout the game. Hopefully gamers will realize that something truly innovating is being done here. – Windows, Macintosh

Flight Simulator 6.0 for Windows

With a better interface and online help, this should appeal to new flyers. For longtime fans, two new planes are included: the Aerobatic Plane Extra 300 and the Boeing 737. There are also more cities and airports, as well as adventures for the player to take part in. – Windows

Monster Truck Madness

Now this is a stupid game. Stupidly entertaining, that is. With enough simulation to make it entertaining, toss stupid looking monster trucks around various tracks, jumping, rolling and squashing your way to victory. The narration is by Armev Armstrong, the voice of Monster Truck Racing (no, really). – Windows

The Condemned

It's battling 'bots in this game where the player is a prison inmate forced to do battle with others for the entertainment of the unwashed masses. – Windows

Hellbender

A sequel of sorts to *Fury3*. Fly around and shoot things while listening to the soothing voice of *X-Files* star Gillian Anderson as your ship's computer. – Windows

Deadly Tide

From the creators of *The Hive* comes this graphically spectacular rail-shooter sort of thing. It takes place underwater, so expect some amazing lighting and, well, water effects. – Windows

GEX

You've probably been sitting at home saying to yourself, "Self, why wouldn't someone make a platform game about a wise-cracking Gecko?" Hey, here's your game. Play away... – Windows

NBA Full Court Press

This looks a bit like *NBA Live 95*, but with up to four-player support over a network, this could be interesting. All 29 teams and rosters are present. Microsoft is also doing *Soccer*, with motion captured animation, and *Golf*

3.0, which ends the hole-drawing delays by using Windows's multithreading ability.

– Windows

MILITARY SIMULATIONS

Back to Baghdad

Here's yet another bunch of guys' efforts to do *Falcon 3.0* three better. If you have the hardware to run it, it does a pretty good job, especially in the area of sophisticated radar instrumentation. The flight performance is unique as well, offering what seems to us at least to be a more plausible yaw reaction during bank than most PC-based sims have provided so far. You want total realism? Here it is. – DOS

MINDSCAPE

Dark Earth

In a world nearly devoid of sunlight, only the strong can survive. This visually rich game combines adventure elements with 3D fighting sequences. Due out in early '97, it will be the first in a series of games set in the Dark Earth universe. – Windows, Macintosh

Azrael's Tear

You, a lowly thief, must "retrieve" the Holy Grail from the underground sanctum of the Templar Knights. You'll be aided in your quest by your thiefling knowledge and tools. Eye candy galore, puzzles prolific, and realistic character dialog all come together to enhance your gaming experience. – DOS

The Chessmaster 5000:

Tenth Anniversary Edition

The grand-daddy of commercial computer chess games, this new version improves computer play and response time. Rendered 2D and 3D boards provide the eye candy, while tips from Grand Master John Nunn are intended for the beginner. A library of 27,000 games and Internet connectivity round out this package. – Windows, Macintosh

Marvel 2099

Lead a team of Marvel characters (including the likes of the Hulk, Ghost Rider, X-Men, Punisher, and my favorite, Spidey) in this side-scrolling action game against super-villain Anthony Herod, the Ultimate Bad Guy trying to control the world. – Windows

MegaRace 2

Another sequel with higher resolution graphics and faster display speeds, this game will also add up to seven opponents on screen, multiple branching paths for each track, and the ability to drive backwards on a track (yaaaaay!). – DOS

Necrodome

A 3-D shooter, armor style. Drive in a variety of combat arenas as you compete for the chance to fight it out in the Necrodome. Realistic physics, multiplayer options, and plenty of explosive eye candy should satisfy gamers who can't get enough 3D. – Windows

Silencer

A side-scrolling game of corporate-level James Bonds, you will use a variety of gadgetry to complete a missions for your "Agency." SVGA, photo-realistic graphics, multiplayer play and plenty of action should



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keep twitchers busy for a long time. – Windows, Macintosh

MINDSCAPE SPORTS AUTHORITY

Aaron vs. Ruth: All-Time Superstars Baseball

Baseball, dream team style. With Babe Ruth as your team captain, you'll choose, manage, and coach a team composed of players from Willie Mays to Greg Maddux (you'll have over 40 to choose from). – Windows

Dream 18: Golf the World

Not a real course, the *Dream 18* course is instead composited from the toughest individual holes from courses the world 'round. Play the holes with a know-it-all caddie and a variety of "different" golfing buddies. – Windows

NCAA Basketball: Final Four '97

Motion capture of actual athletes combined with 3D players will provide the eye candy while an arcade format enhanced with collegiate crowd sounds, songs, and cheers (and even offenses and defenses, go figure) will provide the gameplay. – Windows

NCAA Football: Saturday Showdown

Another college football game that features control of team stadiums, uniforms, tail-gating (!) and even quarterbacking and play calling. There's an arcade play feature and a Coach mode too. – Windows

MISSION STUDIOS

Jetfighter III

The simulation is looking great, and nothing else air-combat-ish at the show had as much rolling around in the skies without slow-down as this thing. If you want to light up the coast this is your baby. A finely-crafted piece of work, taking its time to get to the point where it's really finished. Almost there. – DOS

NEW WORLD COMPUTING

Heroes of Might and Magic II

New World is building upon last year's hit with larger on-screen battle fields, upgraded multiplayer capabilities (up to six players over hot seat, modem/serial, LAN, or Internet), multipart quests, variable height terrain, and new monsters, spells, events, and artifacts. They promise a more detailed plot as well as the ability to play both good and bad guys. – Windows

Might and Magic VI

A continuation of the classic RPG series, this one was too early in development to be shown; don't expect it until sometime in '97. – Windows

Viper: Operation Red Sector

You'll be charged with single-handedly saving the Earth from human creations gone berserk in this sci-fi flight sim. 40 missions, texture mapped 3D environments, and network, modem and Internet play – Windows

Wages of War: The Business of Battle

Control a band of mercenaries in a dark, near-future world in this game that mixes tactical combat with business operations. Lead teams on a variety of tactical missions, but be

careful—your battlefield prowess will need to be balanced with business acumen. New World promises that their new "Assault Ware" AI engine will top that of any turn-based combat game yet. – Windows, Macintosh

NOVALOGIC, INC.

Comanche 3

Not a lot to say except that this is *Comanche* brought to the next level of Voxel technology, with further input on how the real helicopter flies, since it actually exists now. Easy to play and still over the top in battle situations, not only will this version be plain fun, it'll look as fabulous upon arrival as the original *Comanche* did. – DOS

Armored Fist 2

More to say about this title, though. NovaLogic's finally achieved the level of resolution they need for ground combat in the terrain engine, and combined that with better object detail and fantastic levels of object animation to make this new tank sim much more of a sim than the first game. The mission editor/designer will be removed, however, which may come as a mild disappointment to some budding tank tacticians. No matter; try to climb a hill too steep and feel the power (and limitations) of a futuristic tank simulation. – DOS

F-22 Lightning II

Not a game sequel, per se, but rather a military plane sequel. Got that? This upcoming sim promises plenty of realism and uses the same combination of voxel terrain and polygons found in *Comanche 3*. – DOS

NOVA SPRING

Secrets of the Lost Dynasty

A mining company has unearthed a pyramid in the middle of the desert, and it's up to you to explore it to learn its secrets. This point-and-click adventure features rendered *Myst*-style graphics and plenty of those wacky ancient puzzles. – Windows

Wet Corpse

You gotta love that title, eh? This is yet another *Alone in the Dark*-style third-person action-adventures, this one with a cyberpunk feel and plenty of fighting action. – DOS

OCEAN

TFX3

The latest from Digital Image Design. The DID products are Ocean's ace in the hole. It was too early to show this sequel to *EF2000*, but it was announced as having an extensive campaign game, light sourced, texture mapped landscapes, multi-player options and a totally intuitive mission planner. This is one game that will probably live up to the hype, if *EF2000* was any indication. – DOS

SuperEF 2000 for Windows '95

Besides the obvious fact that this version of the highly successful DID game is for Windows, some other enhancements have been added. The coolest to our minds is an AI driven camera that will search the theatre and bring you closeups of action happening outside visual range. – Windows



SILENCER



WAGES OF WAR



COMANCHE 3



F-22 LIGHTNING II

Worms Reinforcements

Worms was cool, but it didn't have network or modem play. That was promised as a patch. Now it gets released as an add-on disk. We call that a rip-off. Ocean calls it an improvement. – DOS

Offensive

Real time strategy that pretends to mimic history. Doubtful. The sell sheet compares it to *Across the Rhine* and *This Means War*, two widely disparate Microprose games that had only one thing in common: bad reviews. – DOS

ORIGIN

Crusader: No Regret

Do you know anyone who didn't like the first game? This isn't really the sequel (more like a 1.5), but once again you're a Silencer kick-

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Privateer: The Darkening

Han Solo, your game has arrived

This game has been in development for a while. The work on it is being headed up by Chris Roberts' brother Erin Roberts (Chris, incidentally, the creator of *Wing Commander*, has left Origin to form his own company). It's recently adopted the *Privateer* name, much to the delight of gamers who've always wanted an updated version of that classic. Here it is, in all of its multimedia splendor. While a central plot, with actors like Christopher Walken and John Hurt, will always be lingering around, the core of the game still revolves around trade and combat.

Some new features include having to buy cargo ships (what, you think your fighter can carry stuff? Think again...) and 20 new ship types. Hundreds of missions are planned, including scouting dangerous sectors, hunting down criminals, escorting transporters, cargo delivery, defending planets and flying recon for the local military. Hundreds of locations to discover will be present as well; planets, mining bases, space sta-



tions, repair and commodity stations, and hidden outposts, to name a few.

In a purely superficial visual sense, the interface is wonderfully stylish, with menus which grow and shrink, and animation on nearly every screen. The all-new 3D combat engine is not carried over from *Wing Commander*, and looks to be speedier than that taxing game. The designers promise that the multimedia and story elements will not overwhelm the exploratory nature of the game, which was the main strength of the original. We'll see when it's released in time for the holidays. — DOS

—Steve Bauman

ing butt on that nasty World Economic Consortium. The setting this time is the moon, which means you'll be spending a lot of time blowing things up in mines. Highlights include 10 new missions, new weapons (you can now melt, freeze and shatter the bad guys), new fighting moves (forward dives, kneeling side-steps) and new enemies (morphing and stealth mechs). Let the carnage begin... — DOS

Ultima Online

Once *Ultima* fans get a taste of this, they may never want to leave Britannia. A real-time world with things like weather and evolution await the thousands of players that will be allowed to inhabit this game world. Hang out in taverns, join guilds, customize your on-screen Avatar, explore or kill people throughout the world. The online event of 1996, bar none. — Windows, online

Ultima IX: Ascension

The next version of Richard Garriot's baby features larger player graphics and a true 3D world with a rotating field of view — the only comparison that's obvious would be Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet*. All of the characters and objects are hand-animated, and multiple parties will be returning (as well as a few old friends). The Avatar must cleanse Britannia of the evil

Guardian once and for all and restore virtue to the kingdoms of Lord British. — Windows

OVERTIME SPORTS

ABC Monday Night Football

This is an interesting hybrid — a hardcore simulation with all of the multimedia trappings of lesser games. While the on-field arcade mode won't give the *Madden '96* boys cold sweats, the stats and play calling is incredibly advanced. Perhaps the most intriguing feature for hardcore football fans has to be the ability to modify plays and playbooks during the game, right there on the field before you take the snap. — Windows

ABC Sports College Football

The same features in the other game will be present here, as will 32 top football teams. Multiplayer play will be integrated into both, as are motion captured polygonal characters, high resolution graphics, and broadcast-style play-by play. — Windows

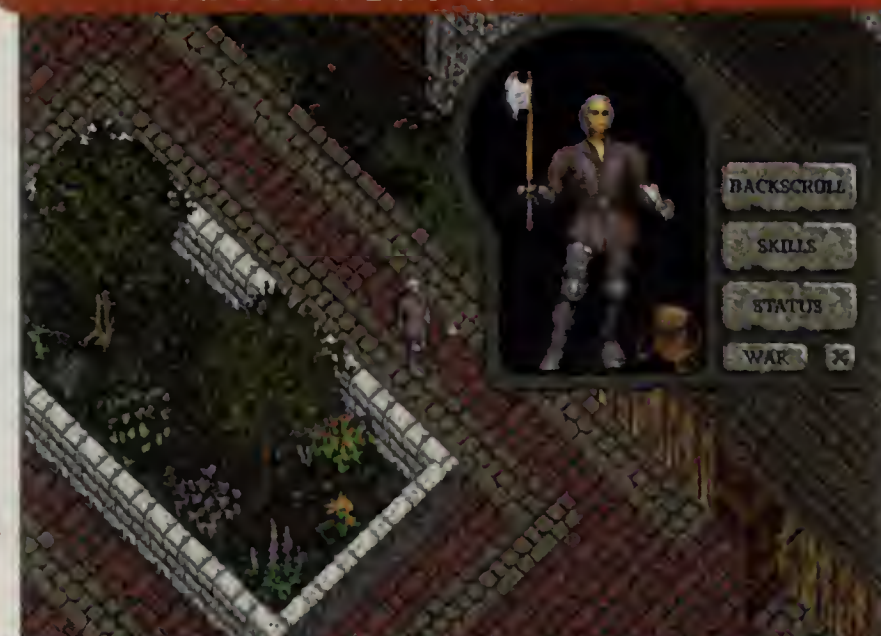
PARSOFT INTERACTIVE

A-10 Cuba

Back to the skies in this sequel to *A-10 Attack*. The first game was great, this one looks to be even better. Polygonal terrain nets an ultra-smooth frame rate on top of an



CRUSADER: NO REGRET



ULTIMA ONLINE



DOWN IN THE DUMPS



NIHILIST

accurate flight model. Hit a bridge with rockets, and burning debris from the explosions will trail into the river. Fly over a city and little polygon cars zip down the streets. ParSoft's rep apologized for the oversight in modeling vehicular traffic. The cars in the city tend to ram each other at intersections. Best news for some of us is that a PC version is in the works. — Macintosh

PHILIPS MEDIA

Down in the Dumps

The alien Blub family has touched down in a landfill, the classy euphemism for garbage dump. The designer actually went to live in a dump for awhile in order to research this graphic adventure title. Blub, Blub, Blub, now *that's* dedication. — Windows, Macintosh

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QAD

Fractal-maniacal graphics which create instant terrain highlight this action-arcade space game where it's up to you to shoot up your enemies and save hostages. Another of these 3D shooters is *Nihilist*. – Windows
Voyeur II

Jam packed with sex and violence, what else does one need to know about this adventure title? How about that it stars Jennifer O'Neill and places the player in the role of a voyeur who has become the witness to a crime and must try to prevent the next murder? We know, that's enough. – Windows, Macintosh



MDK



THE MORTIFICATOR



ECSTATICA 2



THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN

NFL Total Control Football

Now you can manage team resources from an office perspective, or smash your face into the dirt right on the gridiron in this Strategy-Action-Sports game. You can also be coach and force others to smash *their* faces into the dirt. Comes complete with grass stains. – Windows
Demon Driver

Vob is your hover bike. Use it to win Demon Driver competitions and hence climb the social ladder in this futuristic-retro(!) racing game. Race against man or machine with up to 5-player network and modem-to-modem play. – Windows

Bloodlust

Kill or be killed. To find the perfect specimen among the many colonized planets of the future, the Bloodlust tournament has been established to weed out the weak. Only the toughest fighter will survive, so choose your character carefully and fight 'til your opponent's death. – Windows

Cliff Johnson's Labyrinth of Crete

This adventure puzzle game is a tale of Greek mythology. Hera has sentenced you to death for stealing, and you must find freedom. Your only path, however, lies in the twisted path of the Labyrinth of Crete. Gods, goddesses and monsters drive you straight into the jaws of the Minotaur and does *he* ever need Listerine... – Windows

PLAYMATES INTERACTIVE

Into the Void

Up to ten players can compete over a network to conquer the galaxy in game lasting up to a month. Think how the MIS guys are going to deal with *that* eh? You know the routine - build and design space ships, develop planets, blast other players... – DOS

MDK

From *Earthworm Jim* creators Shiny Entertainment, you control a bizarre figure who wears his gun on his face. The overused first-person view is eschewed for an over the shoulder shot. The main factor here is that the enemies in this world act and react intelligently. Your protagonist's weapon has an amazing zoom feature that'll let you blast the coffee cup out of an enemy's hand from nearly beyond visual range, then watch as the enemy reacts with surprise, and dives under cover. Cool stuff that has to be seen to be appreciated. – DOS

Backlash

You take a modern helicopter back in time to defeat the Nazis (who've also traveled back in time to beat on the allies with modern weaponry). First or third person perspective. Another generic 3D game would be *Burning Road*, only instead of kill you race. – Windows

Duckman: The Legend of the Fall

You either love Duckman, hate him, or are blissfully unaware of him. If you're in the first category, you'll love *Duckman: Legend of the Fall*, a graphic adventure which uses many of the show's voice talents. – Windows

Meat Puppets

Apparently this has nothing to do with the band. Lawsuit, anyone? Rendered 3D action

in an isometric playing field. We're promised a good storyline to tie it all together. – DOS

The Mortificator

First-person 3D action based on the Mutant Chronicles role-playing and card games. Their other 3D shooter, *Powerslave* is the 3D action game not based on the Mutant Chronicles role-playing and card games.

– DOS, Windows

VMX Racing

If it wasn't monster trucks, it was motocross. Stadium motocross at its arcadiest.

– Windows

PSYGNOSIS

Ecstatica 2

The balls are back. Groovy. This sequel to one of 1994's best games boasts new, faster SVGA graphics and that distinctive ellipsoid look that manages to be weird and beautiful all at once. The combat has been improved with more moves, the storyline fleshed out, and it promises to be even more brutal than the first. Double groovy. – DOS

The City of Lost Children

This graphically rich version of the current art-house film hit puts the player in control of a small girl as she wonders through a surreal world filled with orphans, circus people and Siamese twins. Kinda like Los Angeles. – DOS

Destruction Derby 2

With larger tracks, more variety, new cars and hilly terrain mark this sequel to one of the most entertaining arcade racing games in recent memory. Also down the pike include ports of such PlayStation games as *Formula One*, *Monster Truck Rally* and *WipeOut XL*. – DOS

The Fallen

This unusual game is all about human interaction. Characters are modeled for personality traits, and dialogue is handled via sentence construction. In a demonstration of the game, you walk up to a character and chat a bit. You pull out a weapon. He kicks you, takes your gun, and starts shooting at you, causing the police to come and arrest both of you. Very cool. – DOS

Zombierville

With polygon zombies running around, this action-adventure puts you in the shoes of an investigative reporter trying to discover information about a military project that went wrong. Want to eat brains... – DOS

Athanor

Do battle with beasts in this futuristic game that takes its world from Greek mythology. Do battle with the Minotaur, Hydra and Medusa.

Discworld II: Missing Presumed...?

The sequel to the wacky adventure from England will also feature Eric Idle as Rincewind, who teams up with that wacky favorite Death to solve a mystery. Graphically, the game has been bumped up to high-resolution. Looks fab... – DOS

Island of Dr. Moreau

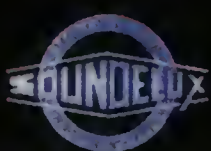
Not to be confused with the upcoming movie, this 3D pre-rendered adventure is based on

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The Space Bar

Enter the Moist Grotto

Boffo! It's Steve Meretzky once again, that singular, bizarre and wacky kinda guy who brought us *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* and *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* and *Hodj'n Podj*, among others. Well, he's bringing us yet another space romp, which lands us this time on planet Armpit 6 (son of Armpit 5, the planet with an attitude), where anything may happen.

You jump into the skin of low-grade company dick Alias Node on the path of some low-life alien criminal, and perhaps your thirst for adventure is outweighed only by your thirst for some outrageous libation. The favorite watering hole of Armpit 6 seems to be The Thirsty

Tentacle, so in you go. It is *The Space Bar* around which your adventure is crafted (beware the blobsters on floor 2).

Here you encounter the charming Pzzazzl, with multiple arms and the unfortunate name of 714Z367. It is one of over 40 characters, many with whom you must establish "empathy/telepathy," a mind-mesh state which will throw you into a flashback of the character's life. These flashback scenarios take you (with all of the alien characteristics of your host) to species-specific environments where (you guessed it) puzzles are to be solved in order to advance.

Thrill to The Moist Grotto (!). Explore Winky Howdy's Cowboy Saloon, where cowpokes don't quite evoke images of

The Wild, Wild West. Wager large sums of currency or your first born child on the game of Bibble Bonker, where you bet on which ball bonks what Bibble, and what will the Bibble babble? Our bets are on Upper Middle Bibble – or on Meretzky, the all-odds favorite. – DOS, Windows
—Cindy Yans



the book. Visit the island where the good Dr. is performing some nasty experiments.

Blue Ice

This game may not make it to the states, but it's worth mentioning because it's a surreal take on the standard puzzle game, using a lot of weird imagery and such. May be worth checking out. – Windows

Sentient

This pseudo action/adventure/CRPG takes place on a space station. Delegate tasks to your various crew members in order to solve a spacy problem. – DOS

REALITY BYTES

Dark Vengeance

This is a 3D action game with some fairly strong RPG overtones. As your character advances, he or she will get stronger, learn more spells, etc. Combat takes place both in and out of doors. Network options include up to 32 players at once, including Internet play. – Windows, Macintosh

ROCKET SCIENCE GAMES, INC.

Obsidian

Four realms of an organically technological (oxymoron?) dream world await as players

are asked to surrender conventional logic as they seek to understand new laws of physical and psychological reality. Fie on thee, Newtonian principles! – Windows, Macintosh

Rocket Jockey

Single player or network competition are available in this 30-level action-shooter which presents head-banging gladiatorial competition atop rocket cycles. Complimentary walls are available for violent crashes. – Windows

Ganymede

This high-powered combat/strategy/simulation game combines multiple vehicle dynamics, complex terrain and varied tactical mission scenarios. Command and conquer Jupiter's moon where blood freezes and resolve melts. – Windows

SCAVENGER

Into the Shadows

The demo of this game has been floating around the Internet for nearly a year now. This is a third-person fighting game/CRPG. Allegedly there's a story, but most of the game consists of running through rooms killing bad guys. What makes the game so spectacular are the visuals – the characters



WIPEOUT XL



OBSIDIAN



ROCKET JOCKEY



INTO THE SHADOWS

all move incredibly realistically, the 3D worlds are intricately detailed and the game-play already looks pretty strong. Definitely one to watch out for. – DOS

Scorcher

This racing game, in a demo version sent before the show, already looks fairly solid, in a *WipeOut* sorta way. Don't miss *Amok* as well. It's a robot-blasting 3D shooter. No one's ever done games like this, have they? – DOS, Windows

Mud Kicker

As if we needed another game with bugs... oh, wait, these are the vehicular kind. OK, it's an off-road racing game featuring Hitler's "people's car." Also down the road from these guys are games like *Angel*, *Gemini*, *Spanish*

The battle doesn't begin until I say it begins.

It's my game and I control the course of conflict.

If you want to play then you better get serious.

This ain't no lily-livered,

thumb sucking mama's boy game. Nuh-uh.

This is war. Messy and mean.

Somebody's going to get hurt

and it ain't gonna be me.

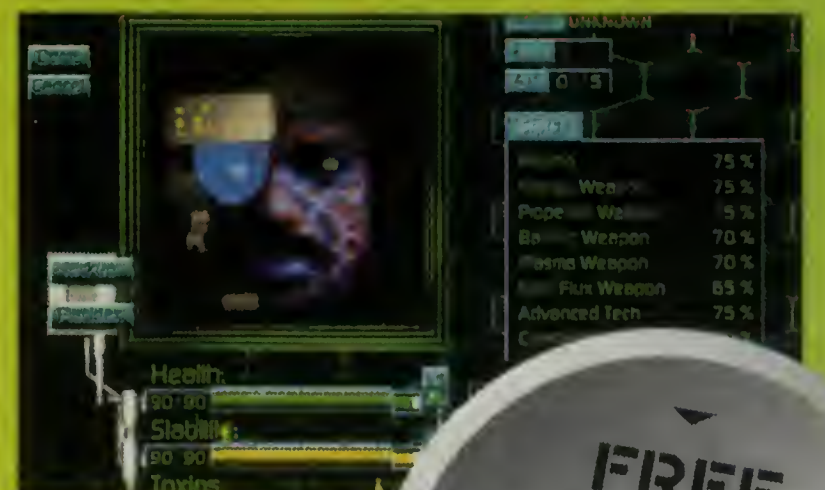
I've got you in my sights

and you look like a sucker.

A puny little Cybrid sucker.

MISSION FORCE

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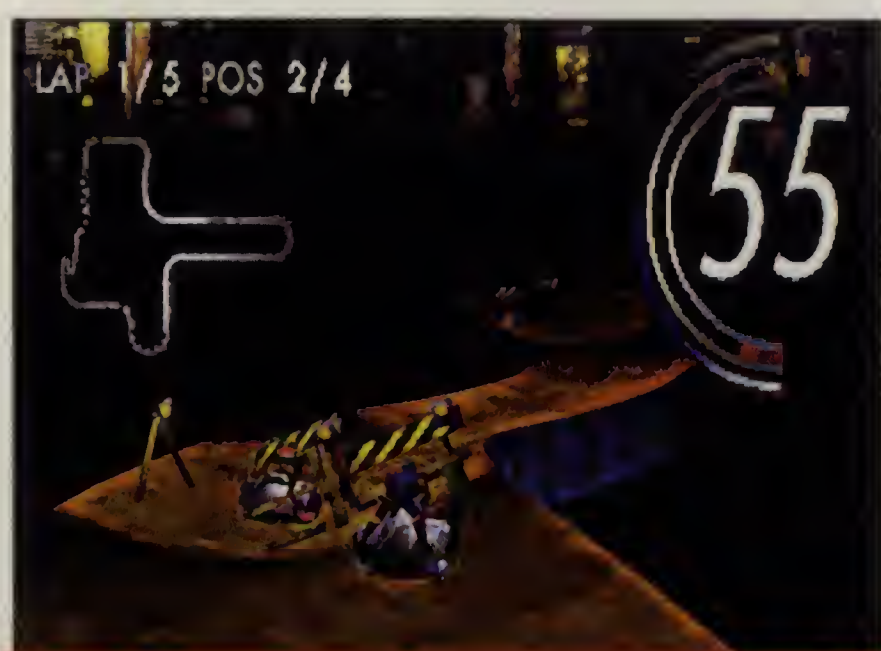
Blood, *Tarantula*, *Spearhead*, *Aqua* and *Terminus*. All will no doubt be 3D and feature pulse-pounding techno soundtracks. Yawn. – DOS, Windows

SCI

Gender Wars

It's boys vs. girls in this action game reminiscent of Bullfrog's world-conquering *Syndicate*. Since the sexes have finally permanently split, you'll have to control your squad of folks as you try to complete missions like trying to steal, uh, reproductive parts. Yum. – DOS
XS

It's 3D fighting in this polygon-based game.



SCORCHER



NASCAR RACING 2



PHANTASMAGORIA 2



BIRTHRIGHT

The motion-captured animation looks superb. – DOS

SEGA

Three Dirty Dwarves

This is a humorous, side scrolling beat-em-up with 2D sprites but a 3D environment. Players can take control of one dwarf, or choose to alternate between the three (hmm, sounds like *Lost Vikings* circa 1993). Multiplayer options have one player controlling each of the dwarves. – Windows

The Sacred Pools

It's an adventure game sporting lots of FMV. Sounds dangerously like an interactive movie to us, but we'll keep an open mind. – Windows, Macintosh

SIERRA

Red Baron II

One of those titles that may be risky to buy. You'll probably enjoy it so much you'll want to upgrade your hardware. Not only does it look beautiful but it looks so incredibly detailed – even this early in the game – you'll think the damn gameworld's fully sentient. Like, if a guy on the ground follows your aircraft with his binoculars as you pass by, you know *someone's* failed to get any sleep for a year. The rest of the whole system is following suit. – Windows

NASCAR Racing 2

With better graphics, sound and interface, this sequel probably won't be as revolutionary as the original. However, the big draw will be multiplayer play, with modem and eight player LAN modes. Perhaps bigger is the formation of the *NASCAR Racing League*, the online service sanctioned and monitored by NASCAR, that will allow up to 32 players to crash into each other. – DOS, Windows

Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle of Flesh

Says PR/Marketing: "The original *Phantasmagoria* has terrorized over one million game players." – true enough, and several of us for the wrong reasons. But on its feet and gamer than ever is the *Phantas 2* design team, bringing us a Mature-rated second installment in this horror anthology. The protagonist, Curtis Craig, has come from a mental hospital to our living rooms in a story of madness, mayhem and murder. – DOS, Windows

Betrayal in Antara

This follow-up to 1993's successful *Betrayal at Kronador* is a role-playing adventure in which the player commands four main characters in a world of devious plots, political agendas, secret societies and the like to uplift the Antaran Empire from its current state of corruption and decay. – Windows

Birthright

Sierra's first licensed AD&D title from TSR is an arcade-like 3-D presentation that doubles as a role-playing, strategy-war game with multiplayer capability. You're set loose in a world where rulers are bound to the land by ties of blood. Can yardsticks be far behind? – DOS, Windows

CyberGladiators

This action title allows the player to completely control fighting moves, manipulate change and interrupt fights on the fly, choose fighters' strength levels and war difficulty level, and design his own fighter moves. Featured are eight fighting arenas on four different planets. Kill someone today! – Windows

Hunter Hunted

Choose to be the hunter, a chic alien beast, or the hunted, an upscale humanoid street warrior named Jake. Played singly, head to head or via modem, this search & destroy game showcases the fighters for the pleasure of a race of superalien voyeurs. Don't blush as they watch. – DOS, Windows

Front Page Sports: Baseball Pro 96

Play as manager, coach or player for periods ranging from one game to infinite seasons in which it is possible to detect changes as players age and mature. Advanced physics-based gameplay and motion-capture technology enhance the feeling of realism. Balk not. – Windows

Leisure Suit Larry 7: Yank Hers Away

Can it really already be time for another *Leisure Suit Larry* title? It seems like only yesterday... but sure enough, the ever-famous team of Laffer and Lowe is back! Featuring more bawdy humor, tasteless puns (take the title, for instance, *please*) and buxom babes than any previous Larry game, number seven books us on the world's gaudiest cruise ship, the HMS Bouncy, where the goal is to porthole up with the ship's gorgeous commander, Captain Thigh. Sigh. – DOS, Windows

Lighthouse

This sci-fi fantasy title with puzzles based on a pseudo-scientific technology (don't ever call it *Myst*-like, no matter how much you think it is) promises an intellectually sophisticated story in a universe where technology and nature combine to create an unsettling morality play. – DOS, Windows

Lords of the Realm II

A sequel to the popular game set in medieval England, this historical strategy game improves upon the original in just about every way—graphics, interface, gameplay, you name it. Manage your resources in a turn-based game, or drop into real-time for your battles (similar to the system in *Caesar II*, but improved). Vie for control of the island against computer opponents or human friends over modem or LAN. – Windows

MissionForce: Cyberstorm

This sci-fi strategy game set in the *EarthSiege* universe is looking even better. Command teams of Hercs against the Cybrids in a series of increasingly tough missions across many worlds. – Windows

Robert E. Lee: Civil War General

Take on the burden of the famous Confederate general as you work your way through a variety of historical (and, if you do well enough, hypothetical) battles during the Civil War. – Windows

Urban Runner

Play Max, the American journalist, or Adda,

"Live Fast, Die Young..."

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Rama

Move over Kama and Dharma

Visit Bangkok or London. Consult your travel agent. Or take a look at *Rama*. Based on the *Rama* series of books by Arthur C. Clarke and Gentry Lee, this sci-fi adventure sweeps you two hundred years into the future where a gigantic dark cylinder (even more gigantic than *Felix the Cat's* The Master Cylinder) arrives in our solar system from...well, from somewhere. Twelve astronauts dock with the cylinder (christened Rama), and set out to explore it. Luckily for you (?), the party's commander dies mysteriously and you are hired as a replacement astronaut to join the crew during the initial stages of the expedition (saving you from the embarrassment of having purchased the game for nothing).

Why is Rama here? Where did she come from? Who or what constructed the spaceship in the first place? What herbivorous mammal graces the side of milk cartons? Some of these are questions you will keep in mind during your quest through the mammoth bowels



of Rama, as you set out to save her and your colleagues from destruction.

We see the finely sculpted graphics we have come to expect from Sierra across a myriad of "worldlets" to explore – Bangkok and London, for example, so named for the external architectural qualities beneath their domes. Fabulous alien creatures abound, including the octospiders, who speak in colors (speaking in tongues is out of the question). We are told that readers of the *Rama* series will have a bit of an easier take on the game environment, but newcomers are encouraged to apply, too. Looks riveting! – Windows, Macintosh —Cindy Yans

the German economist in this suspense thriller that combines wronged-man-on-the-run action chases and interactive video in a world of murder and intrigue. "Better run fast..." says marketing. "We'll say," say we. – Windows
Trophy Bass II

Hook up to the Internet to cast a group of sports fishermen for real life tournament events. Get reel! – Windows

The Time Warp of Dr. Brain

Sporting a new 3-D claymation look, this latest puzzle game in the *Dr. Brain* series provides three difficulty levels for ages 12 through adult. Explore the reptilian, paleo-mammalian and neomammalian formations of brain activity – you've nothing to lose but your mind. – Windows, Macintosh

3-D Ultra Pinball: Creep Night

Yes it's true! Another pinball game hits the streets. Bring on haunted bowling!

– Windows, Macintosh

King's Quest VIII

In a year and a half or so, we will be treated to *King's Quest VIII* (or IX, for those who played *Torin's Passage*...) It will feature a 3-D polygon engine using flight sim technology to provide the illusion of complete around-the-horizon movement and is the biggest financial investment in the name of technology made by Sierra to date. – Windows

Power Chess

The AI opponent in this product is designed to perceive your level of play and automatically adapt accordingly. No matter what your skill

level, the chess engine will provide a challenging game that will enable you to learn and improve. Check it out, mate. – Windows

Pro Pilot

The acquisition of SubLogic bears its first fruit in this competitor to Microsoft's world-conquering *Flight Simulator*. Fly the Cessna 172, 185, the CitationJet, the Beechcraft Bonanza and Super King 300 in and out of 2500 airports. – Windows

SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERACTIVE Star Trek Borg: Experience the Collective

An immersion-role playing game in which players, as cadets, experience the world through the strange and powerful eyes of the Borg. It stars your mentor "Q," portrayed by John DeLancie, and features new original footage. Thank goodness.

– Windows, Macintosh

Tom Clancy's SSN

This title's development company president just happens to be a close friend of the prolific author who has created an original story solely for this CD-ROM action-adventure in which the player sets sail for 16 missions on the USS Cheyenne nuclear attack submarine. It appears to double as a sub sim, as the commander's viewport is key to the non-cinematic gameplay. Other titles on the way include *Private Eye*, *Pie-Jackers* and an original Douglas Adams (author of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) design called *Starship Titanic*. – Windows, Macintosh



HUNTER HUNTED



THE TIME WARP OF DR. BRAIN



PRO PILOT



NEMESIS: THE WIZARDRY ADVENTURE

Brainstorm

A series of brain-teasing puzzles which tests users' deductive reasoning skills. After stumping the user, the logic required to solve each puzzle is cleverly revealed in a succession of 3-D animated and audio responses.

– Windows, Macintosh

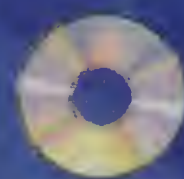
SIRTECH

Nemesis: the Wizardry Adventure

Its in-house title is *No, It's Not Wizardry 8*, but apparently it is considered worthy enough to uphold the *Wizardry* name. This blend of fantasy, role-playing and adventure is designed to cater to a wide variety of RPG palettes, die-hard or not, with an (unprecedented for Sirtech) real-time combat engine that is true to role-playing principles. – DOS

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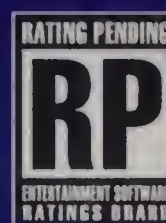
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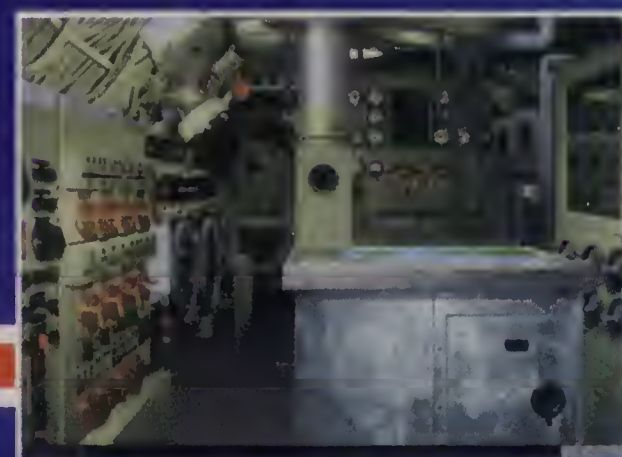
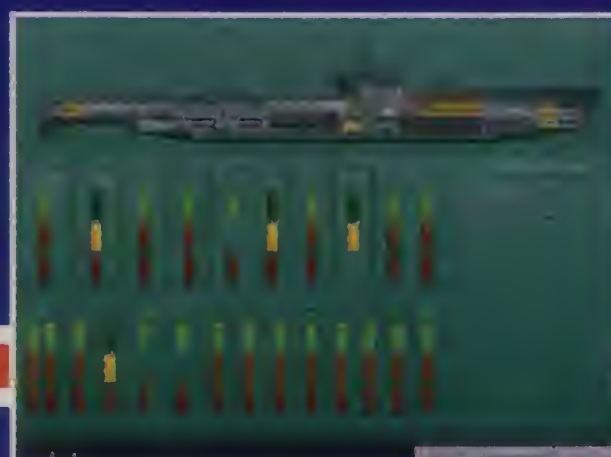
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DESERT BATTLE, MODERN STYLE

SSI & Gary Grigsby team up again for

STEEL PANTHERS II: MODERN BATTLES

by Scott Udell

Steel Panthers... a title evocative of the thunder and clash of those behemoths of the 20th century battlefield, tanks. Last year's wargame by that title was generally hailed by wargamers as a wonderful gaming achievement: a combination of the wargame design talents of Gary Grigsby with a more approachable interface, and plenty of graphics flash. The game was a hit, and has garnered plenty of honors (including CGS+'s 1995 Wargame of the Year award). In an industry where a title's life span is typically measured in a couple of months, *Steel Panthers* is still going strong (helped along, no doubt, by its built-in scenario design feature). Despite its continued popularity, the notoriously eager gaming community began to ask "what's next?" What would the team of Grigsby, (Keith) Brors, and SSI do now? Well, the answer should be arriving this Fall in the form of *Steel Panthers II: Modern Battles*.

THE WORLD'S YOUR BATTLEFIELD

The title *Modern Battles* is a bit of a misnomer, as the game will cover conflicts starting five short years after the end of World War II. While SSI promotional literature says the game will be "set in Europe, Korea, and the Middle East," Gary Grigsby has said his goal is to let you game out most of the major (and many of the minor) conflicts which occurred, or might have occurred, throughout the world from 1950 up to 1999.

As of this writing, the set of full campaigns that will come with the game hasn't been decided on yet, but several historical and hypothetical campaigns are being discussed. From the annals of history you might see a Korean War campaign, a Middle-Eastern campaign (from the Arab-Israeli wars), perhaps a Vietnam War campaign, and a Desert Storm campaign (and perhaps Desert Shield as well). From the realms of could-have-been/might-still-be you can



ALL SCREENSHOTS ARE PRELIMINARY:
DETAILS ARE LIKELY TO CHANGE

expect something along the lines of NATO vs. the Warsaw Pact in the mid-80s and maybe a modern Korean conflict of some kind.

As currently planned, the forces of up to 26 different countries will be represented in the game (with the "minor" NATO powers like Greece and Turkey being lumped in under a single NATO designation), so you can expect plenty of unique individual scenarios and opportunities for geo-political mayhem in the Scenario Builder. Imagine India vs. Pakistan, China vs. Taiwan, a Sino-Soviet brew-up, or a resurgent Russia – all should be available. As with *Steel Panthers*, you can even have some fun with so-called fantasy clashes, like Israel vs. Taiwan, a feature further enhanced by the fact that the armies being modeled will cover some fifty years of *militaria*. How, for example, might a Korean War-vintage US force have done in Desert Storm vs. the "modern" Iraqi army?

A PRETTY FACE, ALL DRESSED UP IN DESERT CAMO

Two of the things that really helped propel *Steel Panthers* to its current level of popularity were its user interface and great graphics. If you played the original, you'll be right at home with *Modern Battles*, as the interface will be virtually identical (with only some cosmetic changes to the graphical "look"). Keith Brors, the man behind much of the graphical appeal of *Steel Panthers*, is working mightily to provide accurate, detailed depictions of the huge range of hardware in the game. Both Gary Grigsby and Carl Norman (the game's producer at SSI) have told me that they are going to provide more and bet-



PICTURES AND VIDEO
SEQUENCES WILL PROVIDE EYE
CANDY THROUGHOUT

ter animation in the game; for example, aircraft will over-fly the battlefield much more fluidly than in the original. You can also expect plenty of modern combat footage, sound effects, and digitized photos of the weapons systems – no mean feat, given that some of the equipment being modeled belonged to armies that were (or are still) entrenched behind the Iron Curtain, a Curtain that didn't lift often enough to provide photos of sensitive military systems.

IT'S STEEL PANTHERS, ONLY MODERN

On the surface, *Modern Battles* really does seem to be *Steel Panthers* in new clothes.



OB'S FROM MANY NATIONS
WILL BE INCLUDED

Grigsby and SSI decided not to mess with a good thing, and have kept the basic game engine of the original, with tweaks to the system where needed for modern platforms, weapons, and sensors.

"So, what is new?" I can hear you asking. Obviously, there are plenty of modern systems to portray, many of which had a great impact on the tactics used on a typical World War II battlefield. Helicopters (scout or attack) will be under your direct control, and should be the major weapons platform addition to the game. Airplanes will still over-fly the battlefield, but now may be equipped with things like precision-guided munitions, napalm, or cluster bombs. Your troops can fight back with a variety of heat-seeking or radar-guided SAMs, and radar-based systems will have to be on the lookout for "anti-radiation" missiles from Wild Weasel aircraft.

The scale of the game will remain the same as the original, despite the potentially long ranges of some of the missile systems. Gary feels that the very long range shots – even in open desert terrain – are rare enough in the context of the battles being portrayed that it wasn't worth a major (and time-consuming) overhaul to the game engine to deal with them.

Similarly, time (and I suspect memory) constraints mean that the AI in the system won't be customized for the specific tactics of each of the 26 nations being modeled. Before purists cry "foul!" remember that many of the nations have tactics based on either NATO or Soviet training anyway, so this shouldn't be a major hindrance to gameplay. The AI will, of course, be modified to handle the tactics of the radically different weapons systems being modeled (the helicopter and the guided missile have a big effect on a modern tank battlefield), and will have to be able to handle some of the theaters new to the game engine (specifically for the infantry-focused Vietnam War).

"IT'S A BEAUTIFUL TANK!"

A phrase I believe I remember Donald Sutherland uttering in the funny World War II flick *Kelly's Heroes*; it's one that could certainly be applied to *Steel Panthers*. From what I know about the original, and from what I saw at E3, it looks like it'll be a phrase we'll be able to apply to *Modern Battles* as well (modified, perhaps, to say "It's a beautiful tank... and attack 'copter, and guided missile, and...."). I just can't wait to see how they handle an MLRS barrage.

Jagged Alliance, Deadly Games

On the heels of its daddy, a hard act to follow, comes *Son of Mega-Jagged Alliance*. This multi-player, strategy role-playing action title turns strategic and tactical planning up a notch. Mercs are back – talking mercs with over 6,000 lines of digitized speech to haunt you in your sleep. Big bad guns are back, too. Lullaby time. – Windows, Macintosh

Realms of Arkania - Shadows Over Riva

Fresh from Attic Entertainment, comes this third and last member of the Northlands Trilogy. We see a fantasy role-playing game which has been graphically face-lifted – much slicker looking than its predecessors, and are told that the story "has something to do with bugs..." hmmm, an E3 theme to some extent. – DOS

SSI

Star General

This continuation of the *5-Star Series* of games lets you take your generalship out into the future for combat both in space and one the surfaces of distant worlds. Simple resource management won't get in the way battle with over 90 ship classes and hundreds of ground units spread between seven different races. – DOS

Wargame Construction Set III: Age of Rifles

The long-awaited game of warfare in the last half of the 19th century is finally nearing completion. Play from over 25 included scenarios from a range of battles, or six campaigns (e.g., Soldier Queen Victoria's Battles, the U.S. Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War, etc.). Scenario, map, and uniform editors will ensure that those with plenty of time are kept busy, and the random scenario generator will extend the game for everyone else. – DOS

War Wind

Developed by the wizards at DreamForge, this real-time strategy game features four different races, each with their own unique scenarios. Another unique feature is that you can carry units over from scenario to scenario. Multiplayer support is, of course, present as well. – Windows

Renegade: Return to Jacob's Star

It turns out that the "final" battle against the Terran Overlord Government in the last *Renegade* was final after all. Some licensing problems with FASA have forced SSI to drop this from their upcoming release schedule.

TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE

Battlecruiser 3000 A.D.

After 5 years of product development, Take 2 and designer Derek Smart have once again returned to the drawing board on many aspects of this long awaited combat-strategy simulation. Rescripting, re-recording sound and redesigning graphics have all been addressed, and we sure hope it will have been worth it, if indeed we'll ever know. – DOS

Iron & Blood

The first ever 3D fighting game set in the AD&D Ravenloft world, *Iron & Blood* offers 16 fantasy characters including gargoyles, wizards, werewolves, goblins, and scantily

Battleground 4: Shiloh

Revisiting the Civil War's Western Theatre

Shiloh is the second *Battleground* game to visit the Civil War, this time taking gamers to the oft-forgotten western theater. Unlike earlier TalonSoft games, *Shiloh* actually covers three battles. The game's focus is on



the title battle of Shiloh (Tennessee), which occurred on April 6th and 7th, 1862. At Shiloh, the Union Army under Grant was hit with a surprise attack by the Confederates under Albert Sidney Johnson. The wooded terrain of the battlefield will tend to funnel the

action into the few open fields, thereby giving Civil War gamers a challenge quite different from *Gettysburg*. the first Civil War *Battleground* game. Also new to the system are gunboats, which will participate in scenarios like Pittsburg Landing.

Because the battle of Shiloh was somewhat smaller in scope than either Gettysburg or Waterloo, the folks at TalonSoft decided to add in two extra, smaller battles (with one or two scenarios each): Prairie Grove (Arkansas, December 7, 1862) and (my favorite) Wilson's Creek (Missouri, August 10, 1861). While not part of the Shiloh battle, they do fit in well with the theatre covered by the game, and should be seriously welcomed by gamers looking for coverage of lesser-known battles. These smaller battles are also much better suited for head-to-head or play-by-e-mail gaming, satisfying an audience not as well served by the larger mega-campaigns. If all goes as planned, you should be seeing *Shiloh* on the shelves about the time you read this. — Windows — Scott Udell

clad huntresses, each equipped with weapons and magic distinct to their character. — DOS

TALONSOFT

Battleground 5: Antietam

Set for an early Fall release, *Antietam* again revisits the War Between the States. TalonSoft is talking of adding "incompetency modeling" to portray the poor generalship of McClellan during the battle, where his "extreme caution" allowed a much inferior Confederate force under Lee to emerge victorious, thereby leading to three more years of battle. — Windows

Battleground 6: Sinai

The first game in the *Battleground* series to enter the modern era, *Sinai* will cover the three major Arab-Israeli wars ('56, '67, and '73) as well as current and potential future conflicts in a Lebanon/Syria 1997 module. There will also be a scenario editor with which players can tinker with history. — Windows

TRIMARK INTERACTIVE

Galaxis

This game smacks of nothing so much as *Diplomacy* with a space strategy and resource management angle. You can play live, real-time, turn-based via E-mail, and drop in and out of the game at any time (the computer will take over). Since much of the design focuses around diplomacy, for instance, you can't chat live with another player until you've built an embassy, sent an ambassador to communicate with his or her

ambassador, and established diplomatic relations. — Windows

Faery Tale Adventure II

If you remember the original game, you remember it fondly — it was one of the best adventure-style CRPGs of its time. This iteration's been brought up to date graphically, of course, but retains the original game's epic scope. — Windows

The Hive II

This new game (above is working title only) offers much greater freedom of movement within the concept of a pre-rendered environment. Its main strength will be in the thoughtful conception of the game's atmosphere and story framework, with the goal of giving the player a real interactive movie without video as we've grown to hate it. — Windows

Magzone

This futuristic racing/combat/sports game is starting to come together; while there's still little to see in development — mainly some excellent *HyperBlade*-like 3D environments, with some beautiful textured polygonal racing vehicles in same — it still looks wonderful. — Windows

UBI SOFT

Rayman II

The sequel to one of the best platform games out there has more of that beautiful character design that we've all come to know and love, plus new powers, special effects and storyline. Rayman can now enter and play the background scenes. Cool. — DOS



Pod

This futuristic racing game is stunning, and it should be — it's French, after all. Well, the real reason it looks so good is that it uses 3D accelerator cards and Intel's upcoming MMX Pentium technology to deliver blazing frame rates (30 FPS at 640x480x65,000 colors) and beautifully rendered tracks. Multiplayer play for up to eight people over a LAN or the Internet is also planned. — Windows

VIACOM NEW MEDIA

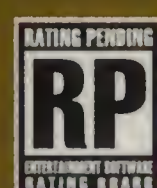
Star Trek: Voyager

This has to be one of the most highly anticipated projects currently floating around the game world. The designer of the game, Doug Church of Looking Glass, worked on a couple of decent games, like *Ultima Underworld* and



COMING IN SEPTEMBER

Commander Zod is waiting <http://www.vie.com>



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System Shock (OK, so they're two of the finest games ever). A Voyager away team is captured by a violent Kazon sect, and the crew is drawn into a typically Trek-ian scheme. The player will control the Voyager and its crew, interact with aliens, solve technical problems and engage in ship-to-ship confrontations. All of the visuals are 3D rendered, and the representation of the environments is by far the best seen in any *Trek* title thus far (though *Star Fleet Academy* is nearly equal). To bad you won't see it until 1997. – Windows

Enemy Nations

This real-time strategy game features one of the first intelligent uses of the Windows interface – you can open as many windows as possible to monitor various locations where conflicts can take place. Players try to establish colonies on new planets before enemy nations make their move on them. Network and online play is included. Not to be confused with Accolade's *Deadlock*... – Windows

Snow Crash

While easy to dismiss as a *Doom*-clone at first glance, the game version of Neal Stephenson's cyberpunk novel (many consider his the best representation of cyberspace) has some interesting features that bear watching. As players try to destroy the virus that can kill anyone in cyberspace, they do battle with any number of enemies – enemies that are actually programs. Destroy one, and their program fragments become available to the player, allowing them to evolve their own character. OK, so it's really just the "get better weapons" scenario, but it sounds cooler. – Windows

Joe's Apartment

Roach games, the big trend of '96. This concept began its life as an MTV short film, is due to be a motion picture this summer, and will be a real-time action and strategy game this fall. Control hordes of roaches as you try and infest a bunch of rooms. Think dirty, filthy, smelly *Lemmings* and you may be close to what's going on here. – Windows

ArchMage: War of the Wizards

This online game allows players to join teams of wizards who are attempting to capture magical orbs, eventually learning enough spells to become the ultimate wizard: The ArchMage. Over 175 spells will be available in this 3D game, which should be available soon. – Windows, online

MTV's Aeon Flux

It's, all together now, a3Dthirdpersonaction-adventurebasedonaclicense. Got that? Based on the bizarre MTV cartoon, you control the scantily-clad psycho Aeon (doesn't that outfit chafe?) as she runs, jumps, dodges and kills her way through six missions and over 35 levels to try and capture the Demiurge, a supernatural being with the power to turn everyone into fanatical subjects. Sorta like MTV, actually... – Windows

MTV's Slamscape

Yikes. Music games. This is a 3D shooter game that is the first of a series of games

that feature a Buzz-bin artist providing music, in this case the "hot" alternative band God Lives Underwater. Other 3D things from Viacom include *Deathdrome* and *Divide: Enemies Within*, which looks like a 3D platform game. – Windows

MTV's Cheap Clicks

These discount titles are inexpensive mini-games, desktop accessories and a quiz show featuring everyone's favorite idiots Beavis and Butt-head. The collections are *Little Thingies*, *Calling All Dorks* and *Wiener Takes All*, huh huh. – Windows

VIRGIN

Toonstruck

With more than a little debt paid to the classic *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, *Toonstruck* mixes live-action and cartoon mayhem in what looks like a superb adventure. Control Christopher Lloyd as the animator of the "Fluffy Fluffy Bun Bun Show" as he's sucked into the cartoon world. Marvel to such wonders as "Butt Bowling." Yes, this one ain't for the kiddies. – Windows

Z

Short of name but long on gameplay, this real-time strategy game may finally be released in 1996. Blast everything in sight as you try and capture all of their opponents' territory. With funny cut-scenes and a tough AI, this game eschews resource management and goes straight for the combat jugular. Network and modem play included. – DOS

Screamer 2

The sequel to the popular arcade racing game features a new 3D engine, six new tracks, four new cars, night and day driving and increased difficulty. And you'll finally be able to get airborne... – DOS

Circle of Blood

You are an American tourist traveling to visiting Paris. Through a series of weird events, a medieval manuscript created by the Knights of Templar falls into your hands. Fascists want it, and all sorts of weirdness occurs in this adventure. – Windows, Macintosh

Galactic Mirage

It's yet more real-time science-fiction strategy as you try and uncover hundreds of worlds. A real-time tactical system with fuzzy logic forms the core of the gameplay, while modem, Internet and network play will be on hand if that AI isn't up to snuff. Manage resources as you try to build a galactic empire. – Windows

Grid Runner

It's yet more high-speed 3D gaming in this maze and capture the flag variant, for one to four players (over a network). Betcha couldn't guess that it has a pulse-pounding techno soundtrack, could ya? – DOS

Heart of Darkness

A perennial trade show favorite, we're sick of talking about how bleedin' cute it is, how it's attracted the attention of Steven Spielberg to turn it into lord knows what, and how it'll redefine the platform game. It's time for these guys to stop hyping it and release it. – DOS



JOE'S APARTMENT



Z



GALACTIC MIRAGE



CADDY HACK

Scorched Earth

This 3D shooter from RenderWare creator Criterion Studios features 18 missions over both air and land. The main innovation in the game is that you can switch between both types of combat with the same vehicle. Yeehaw. – Windows

Caddy Hack: Haunted Miniature Golf

Somewhere someone conjured up this combo of horror and miniature golf. It has nine holes that combine good aim with puzzle solving skills. – Windows, Macintosh

NHL PowerPlay '96

With excellent animation, this new hockey game has already been favorably previewed in this magazine by no less than an actual Canadian (hey, they know their hockey up there). – Windows

"Strategy Game Of The Year"

-Computer Gaming World

"Turn Based Strategy Game Of The Year"

-Computer Games Strategy Plus

[Great Year!]



[Great Game!]

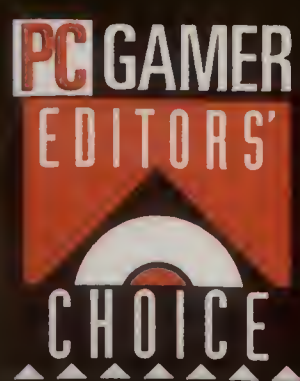
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Reader Service No. 101



Command & Conquer: Red Alert

We can hardly wait

The big news on the C&C front is that, yes folks, *Red Alert* has gone SVGA (at least if you're playing it in Windows). While the units will initially look smaller, the improvements that come from being able to see more of the map at any given time more than compensates. New features that have been added include built-in internet head-to-head play (available only with the Windows version).

Regular readers will likely remember our cover story back in April. It detailed the plot, about the alternate history where Hitler never rose to power and Stalin is the one who decided to march across Europe. You can control either the Allies or Stalin's Soviet forces as you try to crush the opponents.

It's the AI that's receiving most of the attention. Rumor has it that the designers can no longer beat the AI on its toughest levels. The new units give the game a lot of new strategy for expert *Command & Conquer* players, including thieves, medics, attack dogs, spies, land mines, tesla coils, destroyers, cruisers, MiGs, paratroopers and submarines. Some of the new weapons that Westwood was coy about giving out initially include such mystery machines



as the chronosphere and the gap generators. The player can now control all of their air, land and sea weapons, troops can be placed into formations, and you can plot waypoints for them to traverse.

The expanded multiplayer will allow up to six players to compete over a LAN, and the map size has been increased to keep them from starting on top of one another. A "skirmish" mode is included that allows the player to multiplayer practice against up to five computer opponents. Finally, Westwood has finally decided to include a terrain editor so gamers can build their own maps (see, they do pay attention to the number of *Warcraft II* levels out there). All in all, we can hardly wait. – DOS, Windows

—Steve Bauman

Grand Slam '96

This visually stunning baseball game features a unique BPI (batter-pitcher interface) that makes it unique among the other thousand PC baseball games. With managing and arcade modes, 3D graphics and all licenses in place, look for it in time for the fall classic. – Windows

VR SPORTS

VR Baseball '96

With the both Major League Baseball licenses, you will have real teams and players in this 3D, polygon based game. An interesting feature of the game is that the actual pictures of the players are mapped on to the polygonal characters. Very creepy. – DOS

VR Golf '96

This golf game from Gremlin is also 3D, allowing the camera to track the ball as it flies into the nearest bunker. It also eliminates the delay to redraw the screen, though the tradeoff is less detail than a *Links*. – DOS

WESTWOOD STUDIOS

Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny

Where the first of the series featured step movement, this game uses a true 360 degree 3D engine, and coupled with the superb high-resolution graphics, it was

spectacular looking, exceeded by the trademark Westwood rendered scenes. The player controls Luther, the cursed son of the Sorceress of the Dark Army, as he tried to discover a power that will release him from his cursed birthright. – DOS, Windows

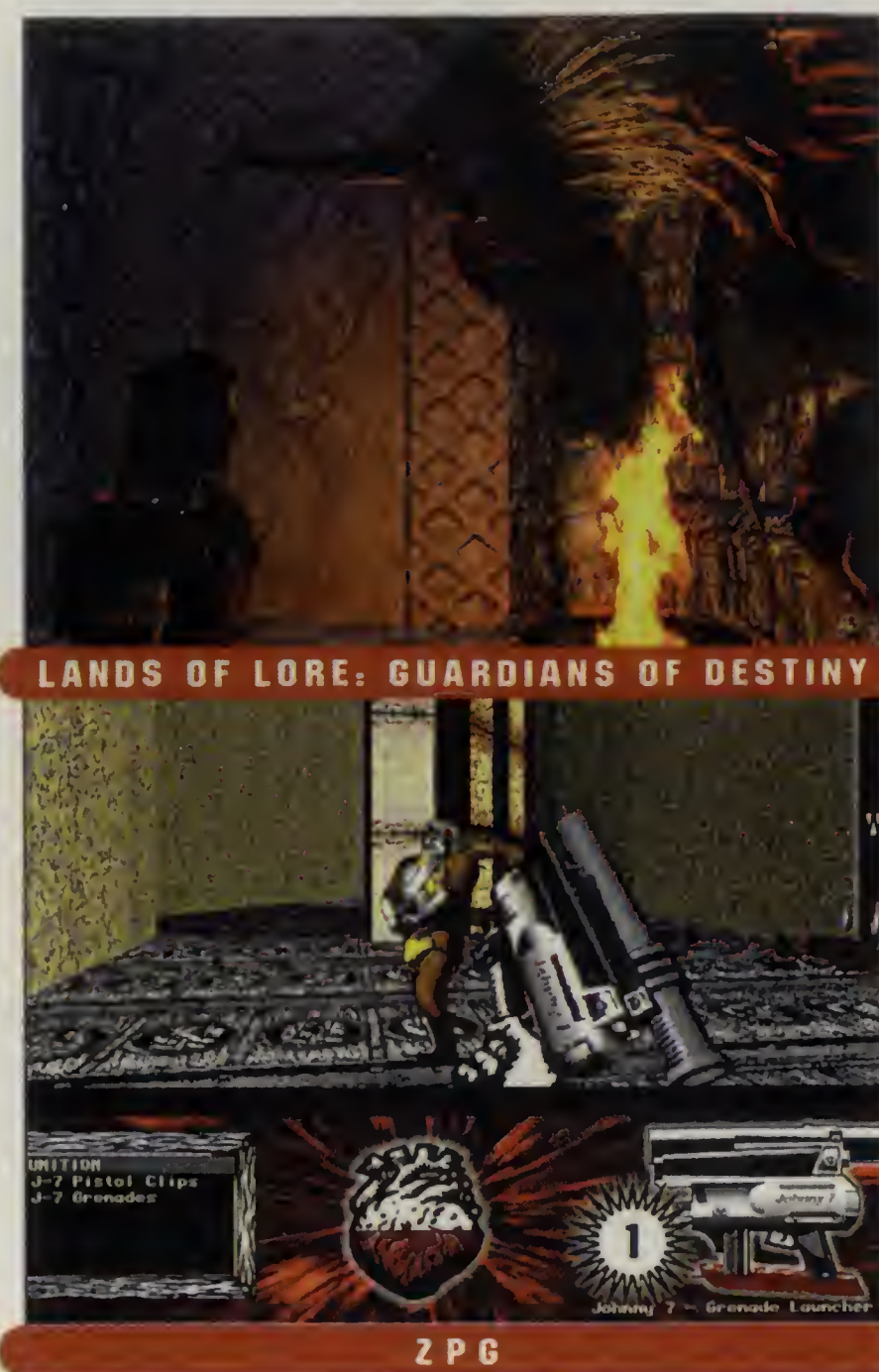
Blade Runner

Westwood was only showing a glimpse of this, behind closed doors, and no gameplay was shown. What was shown looked just like the start of the movie, only it was a 3D Studio rendering of the sets. The cyberactors being used have amazing detail, and Westwood is currently in negotiations with some of the stars of the original movie to reprise their roles (no Harrison Ford, but Sean Young, Darryl Hannah and Rutger Hauer have expressed interest). The little bit they were willing to give away about the plot was thus: you're a Blade Runner tracking down replicants.

ZOMBIE

ZPG

ZPG, or *Zero Population Growth*, is an odd-looking 3D action-adventure with bizarre art from Aiden Hughes and an industrial music score from Paul and Roland Barker (Paul's of Ministry, Roland's a relative). – Windows, Macintosh



NEWS FROM THE FLOOR... With Chris Roberts (of *Wing Commander* fame) leaving to form his own company and Warren Spector (long-time producer of the *Underworld* games, among others) off to head up Looking Glass' Austin, TX office, are there problems at Origin? Company spokespeople say no, that they were just leaving for better opportunities, and they added that the teams working on their projects are still intact (including the *Wing Commander V* team)... Through the Looking Glass –The project that Spector will be taking on in Austin is *Terra Nova 2*. Look for it, as well as their upcoming golf and combat simulations, in '97... **Sub Jane** –The next project that Paul Grace (ATF) will be working on for Jane's Combat Simulations is an unnamed submarine simulation... **Sanctuary at Disney** – After many months of speculation, Disney Interactive has purchased Sanctuary Woods' Victoria Studio. The newly crowned Disney Interactive Canada will use the adventure game engine used in *The Riddle of Master Lu* to produce Disney-specific adventures... **E3 extras** – Due to space limitations, not all companies could have all of their games listed in this article. The full text, with all of the games, can be found at our web site at www.cdmag.com. Some of those products included Anark's bizarre but potentially brilliant *Galapagos*, ArtData Interactive's *Chess Wars* (*Battle Chess* with real people), IBM Multimedia's *Ted Shred*, MicroLeague's *Baseball 6.0*, Time Warner Electronic Publishing's *QIN* (covered in our April issue), TriloByte's *Clandestiny* (11th Hour with kilts), TSR's *AD&D CD-ROM Core Rules* (every DM's dream), Tsunami's impressive business game *Free Enterprise* and Williams' conversions of every Atari arcade game on the planet (*T-Mek*, *NBA Hangtime*, *Open Ice* and more)...

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Variety is the spice of life

Novastar aims to expand your wargaming horizons

Several weeks ago, in an anachronistic fit for a computer gamer, I went out and bought myself several good old-fashioned board wargames. I got into gaming through boardgames (first the family favorites like *Monopoly*, then wargames like *Afrika Korps* and *Atlantic Wall*), but suffered the problem of so many board gamers: no one to play with. So I've pretty much moved on to computer games, but I still look back at boardgames with some fondness; all those little parts, the thick rule books (as everyone here at CGS+ knows, I love a fat manual), the colorful components. Of course, with the technology we have today we're getting most of those things in our computer strategy and wargames now, along with elements difficult to portray in paper and cardboard: fog-of-war, simultaneous moves (even continuous moves), sound and video effects, etc.

So why go get some board games? A single word: variety. I've always been jealous of the sheer variety of conflicts (both historical and imaginary) available to board wargamers. Because of the comparatively shorter and simpler production schedules of board games, it is much easier to produce games covering a huge range of conflicts, from the big three of "Nukes, NATO, or Nazis" (even in boardgames, WWII and, in the heyday, modern Europe were the big

draws) to the smallest Civil War or ancient battle. The few main computer wargame publishers pretty much stick to the big conflicts (understandably), with only a few, independent companies publishing an occasional game covering another subject.

Of course, no sooner do I decide that this lack of variety would make a great column when a fat package from Novastar Game Company arrives on my desk, full of goodies to at least deflect (but still not stop) my griping. While most computer wargames are one-shot deals, some of the best known, longest lasting games are popular particularly because they have scenario editors which allow you to design your own battles. Novastar earns their keep by supporting these games with huge numbers of expansion disks and, in some cases, upgrades to the game software itself. The list of titles they have produced or plan to release just this year numbers over 70. They have scenario and pseudo-campaign disks for *Steel Panthers*, *Empire II* (the sample *Empire II* disk, *Disk #1 Modern Battles* got me all a-quiver – it even had Goose Green and the battle around Port Stanley from the Falklands War, a conflict I'm developing a strange fascination for), *Wargame Construction Set II: Tanks!*, and *Battles of Napoleon*. Each pack comes with a disk and manuals with text describing the battle(s) depicted and (usually) voluminous tables of information on the units included. They have even begun to publish "newsletters" for some of the games (*Tanks!* and *Steel Panthers*); similar in form to the scenario packs, each comes with a booklet and a disk

(unlike the scenario packs, the individual scenarios may cover non-related topics).

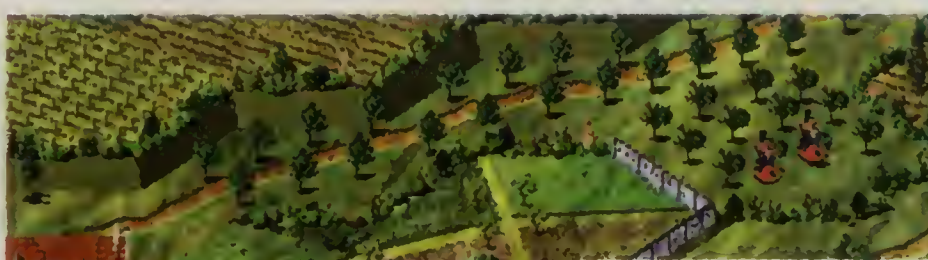
Of course, games featuring these scenario editors aren't without their drawbacks. Aside from *Steel Panthers*, all the ones mentioned above have fairly dated graphics and user interfaces (even *Steel Panthers'* interface isn't great); I know, many *grognards* supposedly don't care about graphics or interface, but that's a topic I'll hold for another column. There is also a strong danger of what I call the "plain vanilla" effect; in an attempt to let the system cover everything, nothing is covered in any great depth, nor are details specific and unique to a particular battle or conflict fleshed out. A game of Waterloo built from generic pieces in, say, *Empire II* will never duplicate the care and detail of TalonSoft's custom-crafted *Battleground: Waterloo* (which I've just gotten in to look at).

Nevertheless, with continuing improvements in gaming technologies, games with these design-your-own capabilities will continue to hold promise for gamers wanting variety. Titles to watch out for in the coming year or so include SSI's *Age of Rifles* and *Steel Panthers II: Modern Battles* and, perhaps, Arsenal Publishing's *Panzers East* and *TacOps II* (*TacOps* has scenario editing, but you can't play the created scenarios solitaire; we'll see if they add this feature to their future games).

Novastar can be reached at (919) 624-7113, or novastar@vfr.net.

On the road

As you can see, this month's Command Post is a bit shorter due to our extensive E3 coverage this month. I'm writing this the day before we leave for LA, so be sure to check out the front of the magazine for the scoop on all that we encountered.



[1,2] *Steel Panthers* and *Empire II* are just two of the games with scenario builders supported by Novastar

[3] TalonSoft's *Battleground: Waterloo* is a fine-looking example of the benefits of custom-crafting a game for a particular battle





ROBERT E. LEE:

CIVIL WAR

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Illustration by Mort Kunstler

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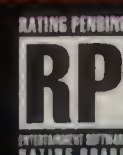
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A fateful day in June...

Battleground: Waterloo

TalonSoft

Windows



If Gettysburg is the one battle that people can name from the American Civil War, then surely Waterloo is the battle that stands out from the era of Napoleonic conflict. Having covered the best-known Civil War battle in their last game, it's not too surprising that TalonSoft decided to use Waterloo as the subject for the next game in their *Battleground* series, for all the right elements are there: an epic battle, a type of warfare that would fit well into their game engine, and a period of warfare that hasn't been addressed by a major computer wargame in years. TalonSoft's rendition covers the fighting on the 18th itself (no fighting at Quatre-Bras, for example). There are 22 scenarios; twelve historical and ten covering "what-if" situations. Several of these are monster scenarios of 44 or more turns, while the low end has scenarios as short as six turns.

Players of the earlier *Battleground* games will be right at home with *Waterloo*; the game interface is mostly the same, although some improvements and changes have been made. The system has grown on me; I found it a bit confusing when I first played *Ardennes*, somewhat more palatable with *Gettysburg*, and now almost intuitive with *Waterloo*. It still may not be quite as approachable an interface as the "wargame" *Panzer General*, but with a bit of perseverance even relative beginners should be able to work it out.

Interface aside, there have been some changes to the game system in general. The most obvious change is in the visuals; if you thought *Gettysburg* was pretty, you'll find *Waterloo* absolutely gorgeous. Warfare was more "colorful" in the Napoleonic era, and *Waterloo* certainly reflects this. The hexes are approximately 25% larger than those in *Gettysburg*, an increase that allows even more detail in the terrain, buildings, and (especially) unit depictions in the 3D Battlevue mode. Unfortunately, gamers will have to make a choice, as the prettiest graphics levels (full zoom) also show limited amounts of the battlefield. However, even in a zoomed-out mode, you still get plenty of graphics splash, although I did have some trouble distinguishing units.

The importance of cavalry on the Napoleonic battlefield has been reflected in *Waterloo* with the addition of a new cavalry charge phase. Gamers new to Napoleonic



[1] The new Extreme Zoom-Out View is good for getting an overall picture of the battlefield

[2] Fighting around La-Haie-Saint and The Sandpits

[3] The famous assault on Hougoumont

[4] Cavalry charges play a major role in Waterloo



warfare may find it a tad difficult to organize a decent charge, but once you figure out how to do it (or when you play a scenario where the cavalry is already lined up for a charge) it can be very satisfying to see one executed well.

There have also been some changes to the system of unit formations. First off, some formation changes can now be done only during the defensive fire phase of the *other* side's turn, something that may throw off those who're used to doing such changes during their own movement. Two new formations are the square and the extended line. With these new formations, and with the rules regarding existing formations, beginning wargamers (or even experienced ones used to more strategic-level games) may feel a bit overwhelmed; although there is certainly no requirement to pay close attention to formation, you'll have

more success if you do.

Another addition to the system is skirmisher units. Some infantry and cavalry units can break off small groups called skirmishers (squadrons for cavalry) that can be sent forward of the main battle line to scout and harass enemy positions. While such units certainly add to the reality of the game, they also add to the player's burden as they can greatly increase the number of units on the game map.

Indeed, one of my chief complaints with the game is that "situational awareness" can be a problem when it comes to managing your units. It's important to keep units relatively near their leaders, but it's a tremendous chore (especially in the huge scenarios) to keep track of which units belong to which leader. The Display Organization function only works for single

formations at a time (and is hard for me to even see in Battle View mode); I wish there were some display mode that would let me tell at a glance what the unit boundaries are. Of course, this is a problem that exists for any game that has large numbers of units on the map (the *V for Victory/World at War* games come to mind), and the information is there (buried in the unit displays). Nevertheless, I still wish there were some way to do this with a quick visual scan.

My second "complaint," if you will, is the sheer size of some of the scenarios. I can easily spend an hour a turn on some of them, and when you have forty-plus turn scenarios this means you won't be finishing a game any time soon. Even the short scenarios can take several hours. *Grogard* wargamers will love it, but many of the rest of us will be overwhelmed. I often found the game during these large scenarios bogging down into tedious "counter pushing" (a problem exacerbated by my difficulties with "situational awareness"). Yes, there is the "semi-automatic AI" setting where-in you issue orders to leaders and let the computer control specific units, but this feature isn't as well implemented as the rest of the game; again, if you can't tell where your units are (or can't differentiate them), it's hard to tell a leader where to send them, or to know to which leader a particular order should be issued.

As for the A/I, I have to say I've been pleasantly surprised. While not particularly aggressive, it's certainly not a pushover

'...surely Waterloo is the battle that stands out from the era of Napoleonic conflict.'

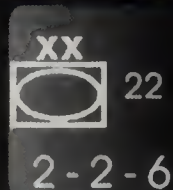
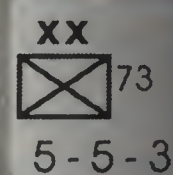
and seems to be fairly good on defense (perhaps a bit *too* defensive; it forms squares awfully easily, and doesn't always go after even "quick kills"). With *Waterloo* I found it to be pretty tenacious (again, particularly on defense) the first time I played a scenario, although those more knowledgeable about Napoleonic warfare may do better than I did.

Despite my grumbling, I have to say I'm extremely impressed with *Waterloo* overall. Different gamers will probably enjoy it for different reasons. Hard-core *grogards* and Napoleonic experts will probably love to burrow into the details and the monster scenarios (probably complaining as they go, but then finding the flaws is part of the fun for them). Despite what my co-workers may think, I'm not (yet) a true hard-core wargamer (at least when it comes to traditional, turn- and hex-based style wargames); I don't enjoy massive counter-pushing campaigns, for example. Instead, I found that my enjoyment of *Waterloo* came when I used it as a personal classroom and laboratory on Napoleonic tactics; I had lots of fun tinkering around with things like cavalry charges and artillery attacks on infantry in squares, and in just plain exploring the battlefield. Also, I enjoyed playing through the smaller scenarios even if I found the large ones a big much

to handle. Is it as immediately and strongly addictive as something like *X-Com* or *Command & Conquer*? For me, no; however, those games tend to pass on as soon as I finish them, whereas you're likely to find *Waterloo* in my library five or ten years hence (or at least until they come out with a new version!)

—Scott Udell

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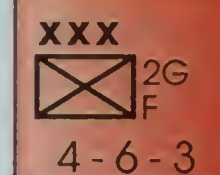
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Chaos Overlords

New World Computing

Windows

★ ★ ½ ☆ ☆

Chaos Overlords is the latest game from New World Computing, and like NWC's other recent releases it's a competent effort at a good price. While *Heroes of Might and Magic* was great, however, and *Anvil of Dawn* was solid, *Chaos Overlords* is, well, chaotic. Not that the game is bad, mind you. There are dozens of unique and often hilariously described criminal gangs, ranging from the pitiful Pudding Clowns to various orders of awesome martial artist monks. Particular favorites include the Ninja Extras, Dominatrix Clique, and the Nancy Boys. A wide assortment of weapons, armor, and accessories for these social malcontents complement a fair amount of things to do each turn: recruit, equip, research, influence, control and, of course, fight. Most scenarios revolve around taking control of all or parts of the city, an 8x8 grid whose individual sectors each contain three sites of varying importance: discos, labs, factories, even museums. Each of these sites impart certain benefits and sometimes costs to the controlling player; success requires establishing and defending your local hegemony.

That hegemony is established by your gangs, and aye, there's the rub. Each gang has scads of statistics, but there is no inclusive roster of your forces; the best you can do is view the gangs in each sector, one sector at a time. Accessing statistics thus becomes *Chaos Overlords'* main activity. You have to double-click on an uncontrolled sector to see the sites in it, double click on a gang to see its stats, and again on each of its three possible equipment slots to see what those items actually do. Figuring out who should do what is much harder than it should be, and this is made worse by the lack of printed reference material. Neither the manual nor the help file give much information. Even during combat, the only thing you learn about your enemy is the damage you do in that particular combat; you never learn more about your opponents over time.

The idea of cyberpunk crimelords in a futuristic urban rumble has great appeal, and the game is fun for a while. Too soon it turns tedious, however, and can be brutal for beginners, thanks to the near total lack of information provided for would-be Godfathers.

Multiplayer options abound, at least; WinSock, modem, direct connect and hotseat play are all here. The computer opponents can be challenging, but don't seem too bright over time. Careful research and deployment of gangs, combined with a well thought out program of expansion, can turn most games into endurance contests you will probably win. Graphics are suitably gritty, though cut-scenes are rather dated-looking, though



[1]Chaos Overlords [2]Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess [3]Cyber Judas

entertaining; the art work in general is a high point, and greatly resembles the style used in such card games as Steve Jackson's *Illuminati*. Still, it's a bit odd for a Windows game to always run in 640x480 unless in a window. This limitation probably stems from the fact that the entire city easily fits on the screen; no frantic scrolling to keep up with the action here.

So has New World made us an offer we can't refuse? Well, not quite, but at \$34.99 street price *Chaos Overlords* is worth a look. At its best it can be a blast; how many times do you get to send the Fighting Nuns against the Press Corps in no-holds-barred combat in the streets? But the entire thing seems rather empty. There are no real unsavory acts to engage in except the rather nebulous "chaos" command, which raises money from a sector at the risk of inspiring the dreaded police crackdown. You don't actually shake down merchants, smuggle contraband, or do any of the other nefarious things a game about crime lords would suggest. Not that I like crime, but there just isn't that much to do here. Eventually you come to a point where you have to virtually throw your folks into interminable battles, which seem to go on forever without any real denouement. The first few times through, the different gangs and weapons are all unique and fresh; after that, interest wanes. Different, yes, but not compelling. At least it runs well and seems reasonably bugless.

—Robert Mayer

Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess

Davidson

Windows

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Using a variety of traditional chess problems liberally mixed with non-chess metaphors, animations, and Maurice Ashley's friendly voice-overs, *Teaches Chess* is a good way for beginning and intermediate gamers to learn about the game and improve their performance. Note, however, the words "teaches" and "learn": this package will appeal mostly to those who want to spend a fair amount of time working to improve their game; while a chess game is included, education is this product's primary focus.

The package comes with four modules, all accessible from a central screen. The coach-



ing module is where beginning gamers will likely spend most of their time, and features a variety of drills. I was surprised by how much I could be drawn into these drills — I wasn't expecting so much "just one more!" from what is, in essence, an educational game. While the Coaching module provides a fairly freeform way of introducing chess, the more serious student will want to move on to Championship Training, a structured presentation of the Challenges and Strategy exercises presented in the Coaching Module.

Once you've gotten through all this you can check out the ten replays of "classic" chess matches. While hard-core chess players probably won't be satisfied by just ten games, I appreciate the blow-by-blow analysis provided by Maurice. Instead of dry move listings you get Maurice explaining the games with voice-over and sports play-like diagramming.

All in all, *Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess* was a pleasant surprise. Instead of a dry series of drills I found it fairly engaging. The production values of the graphics, sound, and video are all high, and I appreciated the fact that the package didn't "talk down" to me, even when I made a mistake. Even so, gamer-be-warned: if you're not particularly interested in learning about chess, or if you're hoping to become a chess master by just clicking your way through some multi-media without a proper "learning attitude" you'll probably want to pass this one by and wait for the next *Mortal Kombat*.

—Scott Udell

Cyber Judas

Merit Software

DOS

★ ★ ★ ½ ☆

Cyber Judas is the long anticipated sequel to *Shadow President*, D.C. True's dark simulation of political and diplomatic power. While on the surface somewhat similar to the *Balance of Power* games, both *Shadow President* and *Cyber Judas* put a more cyni-

spin on the wielding of presidential power, and should appeal to pol/mil gamers, fans of paranoia TV, and pet-conspiracy theorists. In both games you lead the country through the mysterious Shadow Network, an only vaguely described virtual network. Through a complex simulation of politics and diplomacy, you maneuver to stay on top in whichever way you can.

In addition to updating the basic *Shadow President* simulation with new world data and vastly improved graphics, *Cyber Judas* adds two new layers. First off, you can now choose to play with a very autonomous Cabinet, with each advisor vying to increase his or her own personal. For an even greater challenge you can play the so-called Cyber Judas Gambit where, in addition to a feuding cabinet, you'll encounter one or more traitors out to destroy the U.S. and to lay the blame on you. It'll be your job to uncover the traitor(s) through clue gathering and just plain spying, thwart their plots through the application of presidential power, and still try to maintain your course through the mysterious lanes of power in the Shadow Network.

Much like *Balance of Power*, *Cyber Judas* has you accessing a variety of controls to view information and influence actions throughout the world. Data drawn from the *CIA World Factbook* is combined with a complex simulation of geopolitics to create the universe in which you operate. Because you are the President, you get to chart the course for the Nation's policy almost single-handedly. Things happen in the world, and you have to choose how to respond; if you want things to happen a certain way, you'll have to initiate actions that (you hope) lead in that direction. Because of the complexity of the simulation, however, cause-and-effect isn't always immediately obvious.

While I like this background simulation better than that in *Balance of Power*—it's really much more "multi-polar," and the designers let you choose your own moral course (and let you suffer the consequences)—many gamers may find it too cerebral for extended play. Adding in the fractious Cabinet members to the mix only increases the complexity—you have to weigh their advice at all times. Another problem I have is that this simulation definitely focuses only on the Executive branch; Legislative and Judicial are basically ignored. While this does fit in with the fiction of the game, having to deal with Congress and the Courts would have only increased the game's realism.

The interface, while visually very appealing, sometimes takes a bit getting used. My biggest quibble is that you can't access the *CIA World Factbook* screen directly from the map filter, something you'll have to do a lot when playing the Cyber Judas Gambit. Also (and this is an extreme quibble), I noticed a few informational errors; for example, the U.S. is given many more nuclear missiles than it ever had (I think they confused warhead count with missile count).

For me it was the hunt for the Cyber Judas that really made the game. As you use your power to combat the actions taken by the Cyber Judas you'll also be trying to uncover his or her identity through some judicious snooping via the Shadow Network. Of course, knowing whodunit doesn't mean you'll get a conviction—you may have to weaken their power base before accusing them (or use the so-called Covert Discipline—assassination—to rid yourself of their troublesome presence, a very risky proposition indeed). As president you can't spend all your time playing virtual Sherlock—actions in the rest of the world will demand your attention as well. Luckily this real-time game lets you execute orders while paused, so you can stop play for as long as you like while putting a variety of actions into motion.

While the sheer cynicism of this game bothers me (and certainly removes it from consideration as an educational tool), I still found it awfully tempting. The combination of political sim, Watergatian intrigue, semi-adventure, and *Clue* ("the Secretary of State did it in Angola with Religious Terrorism") is surprisingly engaging, and only my questions of its long-term playability mixed with my interface quibbles keep me from giving it an even higher recommendation.

—Scott Udell

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Civilization II

More secrets revealed: The rest of the commandments

We continue this month with the rest of the Civ II commandments and a few bonus ordainments as well.

6. Thou shalt prepare for future wonders well in advance.

Some wonders are just too good to allow anyone else to enjoy. Leonardo's Workshop, J.S. Bach's Cathedral, the Hoover Dam, Michelangelo's Cathedral; these things are intended only for those of the true faith. So, how to make sure the infidels don't get their grubby paws on your wonders? You can't prevent some poaching, but you can make it harder for them. When on the verge of an advance that will let you build a particular wonder, start stockpiling those caravans and freight units. As soon as you can, rush those camels to the build site and raise the rafters pronto. If your foes beat you to the punch, and you've got other wonders available, switch over and build those rather than take the 50% hit on switching production. It is often better to keep a city building a

wonder that is already built rather than trashing the shields, as long as you can roll the production over into another wonder fairly soon. Just make sure you have some new wonders coming up sometime soon.

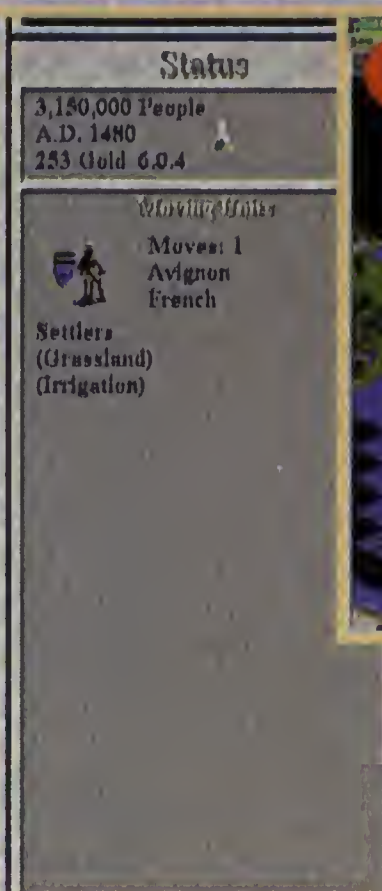
7. Thou shalt defend thy cities or be cast into the lake of dioxin.

Many a codex and tome recommends two defensive units, but lo! Such is not enough. Two units plus an offensive unit, preferably a mobile one such as knights or elephants early, dragoons, cavalry or armor later, is the minimum garrison in times of trouble (which means about 90% of your reign). And, as my brother the shop foreman of the City Wall

Builders Union, Local 213 says, "A city without city wall ain't worth diddly squat." While your foes waste their substance in futile assaults, your assault troops can sortie out and eliminate those pesky catapults and cannons with relative impunity. Besides, you never know when a stupid barbarian with horns on his head might be waiting around to be ransomed, and you don't want to be chasing him with a slug-like phalanx, do you? When Mr. Fission & Ms. Fusion come to play, however, either keep your unit density down or build SDI like crazy. Nothing ruins your day like watching the entire Babylonian Armored Corps go up in radioactive smoke.

8. Thou shalt not let thy wrath make thee wroth.

Or, just because some piss-ant civilization next door gets mad and makes war on you, you shouldn't lose sight of the big picture. As long as your cities are well defended (see Commandment 7), and your foe is truly ant-like, let their legions beat their swords into plowshares (what the hell are plowshares asked this suburban boy?) upon your city walls. Eventually



[1] Not too bad, but a little tweaking could make this town hop

[2] The humble Settler; you can never have too many

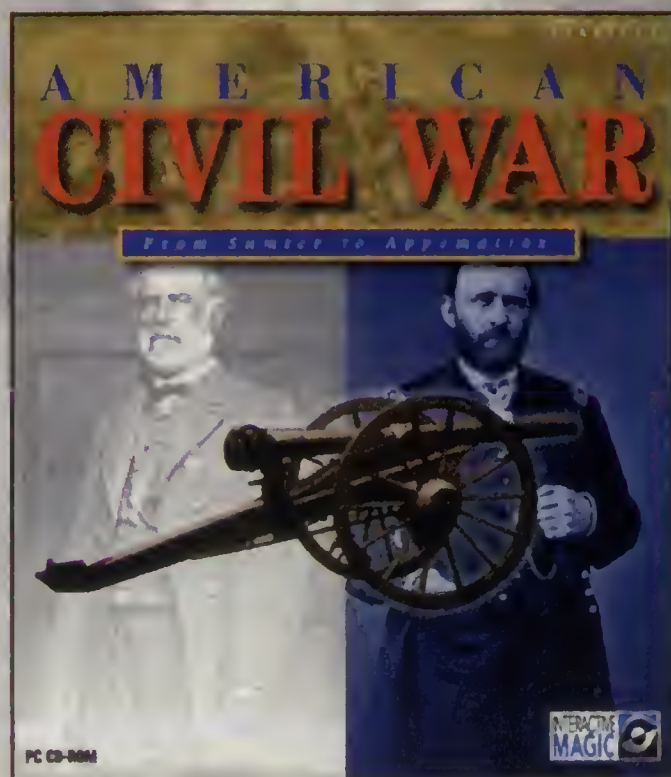
[3] Nice and tidy, packed in like sardines but using space efficiently

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your neighbor will get tired and beg forgiveness. Be warned, though; once an enemy makes war on you, especially by sneak attack, they will probably continue to harass you. You might want to annihilate them on your lunch break.

9. *Thou shalt spare no effort to improve thy miserable empire quickly.*

In particular, make a beeline for Monarchy, then Invention. You need a king (no, not your Attitude advisor, the royal kind). You also need Leonardo's Workshop, unless you like rebuilding your military every few centuries. You need to expand the blight of your civilization to cover the continents with bawling babes and sprawling tenements, the better to overwhelm your enemies with armies, technology, and raw sewage. Build settlers early and often, as long as good city sites are near and you can defend what you build. Caravans are a necessity to win Wonder races, so Trade should be a high priority. Diplomats, and hence Writing, are great tools too, for peace and war, while a course that leads to Tactics can lead your troops to alpine heights of valor. Use your bagmen, er, diplomats, to corrupt, er, persuade foreign troops and barbarians to join your side; settlers make particularly good buys.

10. *Thou shalt always cheat like a riverboat gambler.*

After all, *you* are the Grand Wazoo here, and it's your fifty bucks. Want to try a hard line in diplomacy? Save first. Want to start a war?

Save first. Don't be afraid to restart, either. Just consider it a bad dream brought on by undigested grain. Fiddle with the custom until you get a world you like. Steal ideas from folks on-line, and pretend they're your own. Keep restarting until you get the perfect setup, if you've got the patience. Play on weenie levels and cackle demonically as you dominate the world. Restart the game if you don't get a good starting location, preferably with lots of rivers. *Never* accept a game that makes you start in the Gobi desert, or in the frozen tundra. Use your spies to investigate foreign cities, then change their names to things like "Loserville" and "Privytown" (yes, you can really do this!). Above all, have fun.

There was more, scribbled on the back in black felt tip after a note reading "Be sure to check out the most excellent series of articles in *Computer Games Strategy Plus* coming up soon." Mostly it was lottery numbers, horoscopes, and a hot tip for the third race at the Aqueduct, but I could make out a few useful items. One, scrawled in terrible Babylonian, noted that later versions of *Civ II* included nifty things like a visible city radius in the grid view and autopilot settlers. Another, block printed in Aramaic, reminded would-be world beaters that sometimes just surviving until the end of the game was accomplishment enough, especially when playing against kings or better. A Phoenician passage warned against building impenetrable walls of fortresses on your frontiers, lest you keep out not only your neighbors but

your neighbors' caravans as well. The most interesting item in

this collection of addenda, however, was a brief paragraph in passable Assyrian, which included the following tips: 1) Build cities on rivers, as you get great trade production and your sewage flows away from the palace; 2) Don't pick fights with all your neighbors at once, or you will die; 3) It's easy to provoke your neighbors into starting a war by refusing all of their requests and demanding tribute all the time; and 4) never, never, never draw into an inside straight.

Finally, I thought to myself, the wisdom of the ages is truly in my hands. Now, I would no longer have to endure the humiliation of paying tribute to Gandhi, of fleeing from the armies of France, of having to let the Americans beat me to the punch on all the best Wonders. Visions of world conquest danced in my head. Maybe with this knowledge I could advance even, dare I hope, to playing at Prince level? Nothing seemed too outrageous now.

"Thank you oh great hermit," I said as I bowed while trying to avoid bending too close to the old man, who obviously had never heard of modern personal hygiene products. "How can I ever repay you?"

The old fellow got a faraway look in his eye as he said to me. "Well, you can start by getting off my foot. You've been standing on it for half an hour." With that he pushed me out of his tent. As I tumbled the forty leagues down the mountain trail, clutching my prize, I passed another pilgrim making his way to the old hermit's hut. "Hey," he shouted as I rolled past, "did you find out the secret of life?" All I could do as a hurtled down the slope was call out "Yeah! Don't build cities in the desert, and remember that a pair of stealth bombers always beats three triremes!"



[1] Uh oh, better get the PR flacks in here. Looks like someone's been lying, cheating, stealing, and generally acting like a civilized nation again

[2] Yodeling may give you the willies, but these guys sure can fight





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TacOps

Defensive Operations: Holding off the OPFOR Hordes

When *TacOps* was released in 1994 for the Macintosh, it created immense excitement in the wargaming community. Finally, here was a game that re-created those satisfying hours spent in my youth, hunched over a paper wargame shoving piles of cardboard and generally watching my grade point average fall through the floor. Just admiring the screenshots on the 'net sent shivers of anticipation up and down my spine. There was just one catch: I didn't own a Macintosh. No-one on my street owned a Macintosh. Heck, even the local Macintosh outlet didn't have a Macintosh, instead relying on large cardboard cut-outs to attract potential customers. Thus, the next two years were spent eagerly awaiting the release of the PC Windows port. Well, the big day rolled around a few months ago and, since then, I've managed to play through several dozen scenarios of what I must describe as a highly detailed and incredibly intense game. In past issues the designer, Major I. L. Holdridge, has graced these pages with some accurate tactical notes and tips, most of which have been included in the *TacOps* manual (I strongly urge readers to check out this section if you haven't already!). What I intend to do is expand upon his previous work, exploring some of the operational procedures and strategies I've used in *TacOps*.

Defensive Operations

While *TacOps* has a large variety of unit types and map configurations, there are only two basic situations a defending US player will face: defend particular locations or prevent a certain percentage of OPFOR units from exiting the map. This is your primary mission. If you can manage to keep him from reaching the board edge or his victory objectives, you win the scenario. As a defender, you are usually faced with an attacker possessing a 2:1+ advantage in units, a daunting prospect for even a seasoned commander. Thus, your first task is to reduce the odds to more manageable levels. You can achieve this by a combination of dispersing and ambushing the enemy. Once you've reduced the odds, you're ready for the final phase, confronting the enemy. For this article, I'll use the Task Force Gallagher 8 scenario as an example (one of the tougher ones) with default preferences. Let's take a look at dispersal first.

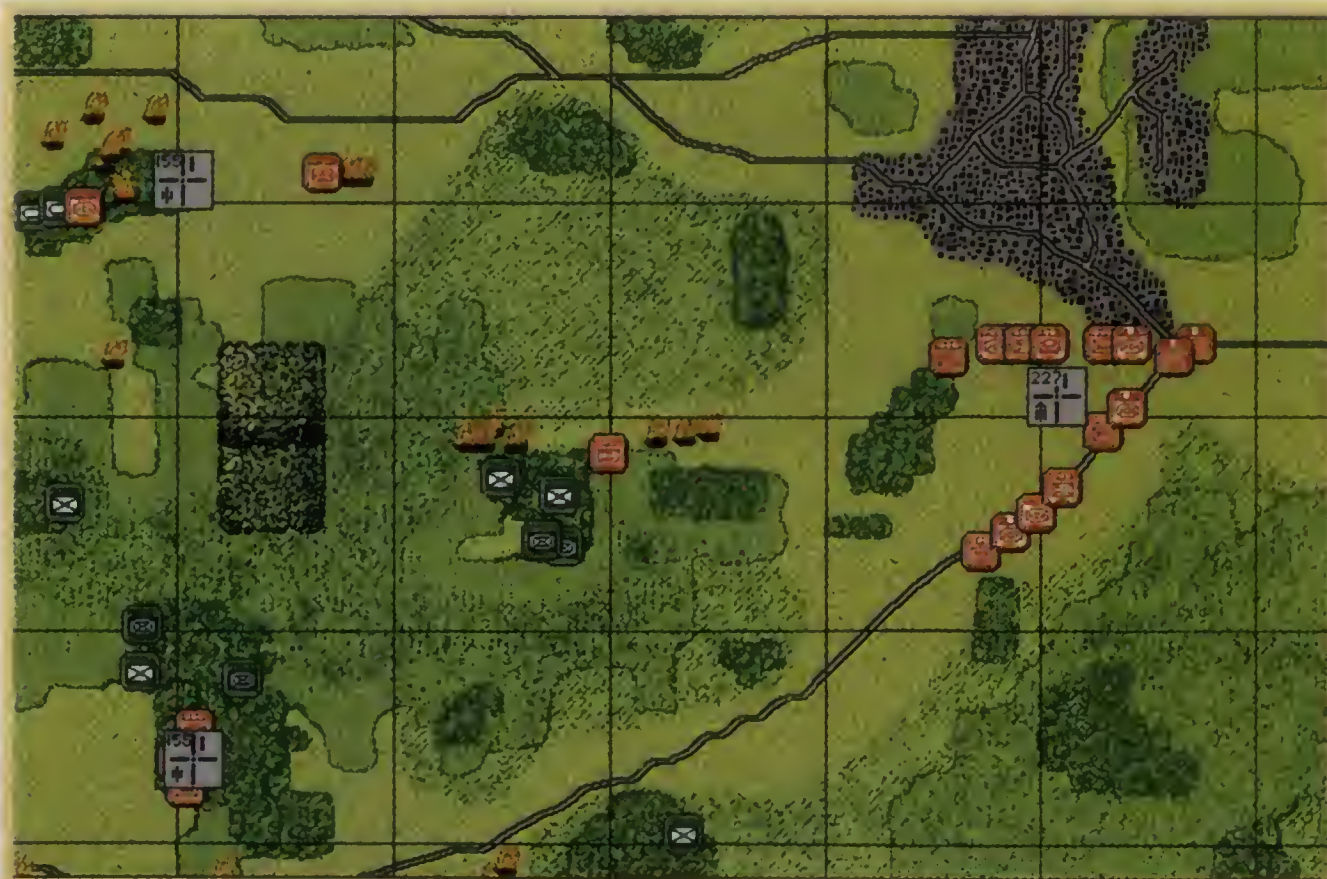
Dispersal

OPFOR has a nasty tendency to enjoy maneuvering in company and battalion formations. Successfully engaging a force of this size at any point on the map usually requires a large percentage of your available units, resulting in a dearth of units elsewhere along your front. In scenarios like Gallagher 8, you have to face three of these battalions, all arriving at the same time and usually attacking along three separate axes! What you need to do is reduce the enemy's numerical advantage at points in the battlefield where you wish to engage him more decisively. We'll do this by dispersing enemy formations.

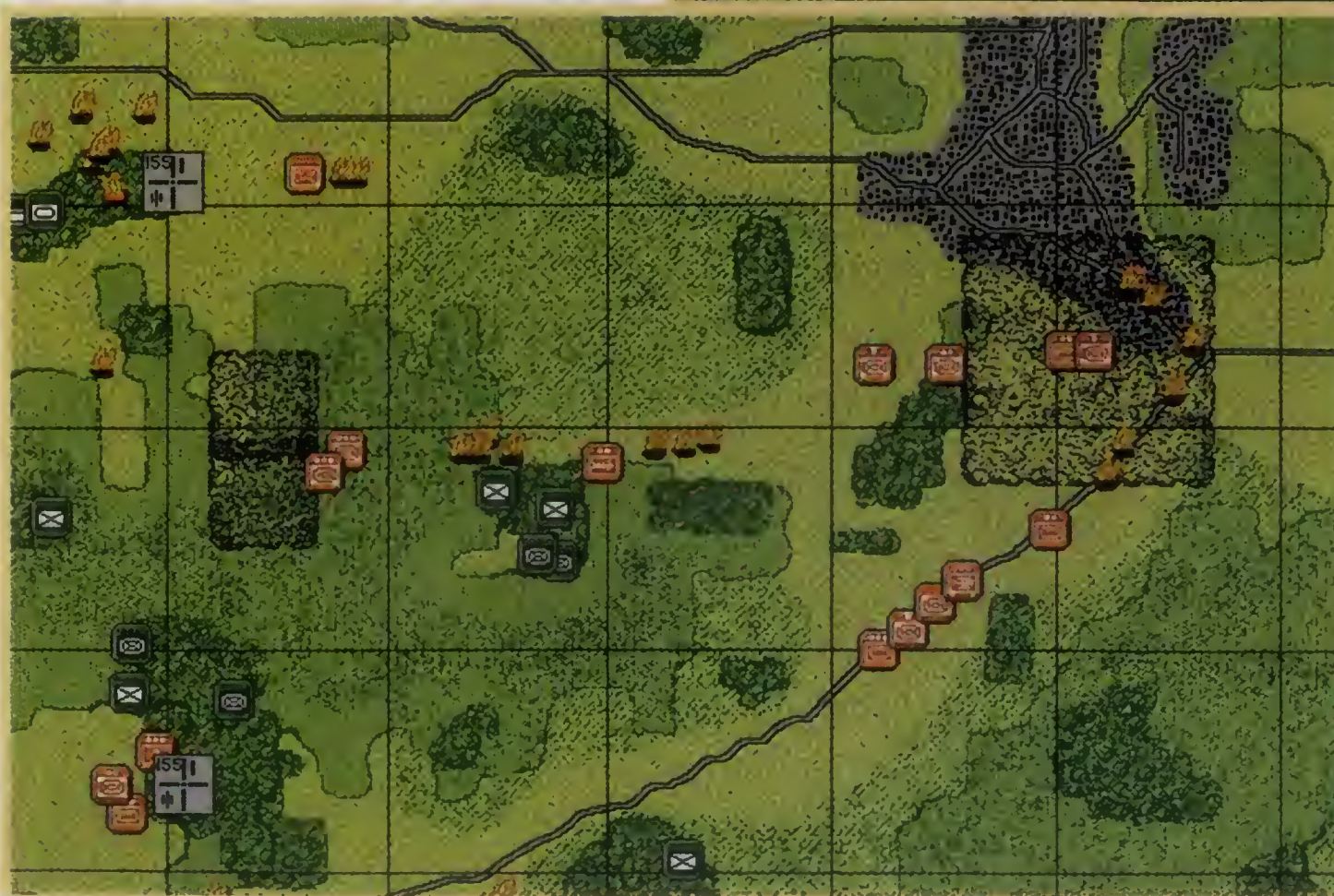
Use your cavalry (M3s and maybe some detached M2s if you're short of recon units) to harass the enemy's spearheads from their flanks (make sure you dismount their inherent infantry teams first at a different location). Using SOP you can order your cav units to fire once from cover (woods/towns) and then automatically reverse deeper into the woods to avoid retaliatory fire. After a few of these "flea bites" you'll probably attract the attention of an opposing platoon commander, who'll change direction and come after you. Just shift positions via a concealed route and repeat the dosage a kilometer (click) or so down the road. If you're feeling particularly confident, allow the enemy recon units

to pass (leaving them for your main line of resistance) and try "baiting" some of the main battalion elements when they eventually enter the map. The rewards are greater if you can get an enemy company gallivanting off in the woods but the risks of being discovered are increased; it's your call.

The dismounted scout teams should be used to spot for your artillery assets; don't forget to zero their weapons range. Make sure they have good coverage of all potential approaches; you'll be pretty embarrassed if an OPFOR motorized battalion appears out of the woods *behind* your main line of resistance! Judicious use of off-board artillery can split up formations as units become suppressed or immobilized. If you concentrate MLRS and ICM artillery fires on roads being used by a particular battalion you can sometimes force some of their subordinate companies to maneuver off-road to avoid excessive casualties. This forces the battalion to separate, as the faster elements moving on roads outdistance their off-road brethren.



Top: A MLRS strike on the main regimental group. Note the observer at the bottom of the map and the positioning of the strike; even an observed impact zone may scatter. Before ...



Bottom: ...and after. The wrecks in town suggest that the third battalion (unobserved) is heading northwest; make use of all the intelligence you can gather

Don't use air-strikes on the main enemy force; the high density of SA-16s within motorized rifle battalions will virtually guarantee that they'll get shot down. Save them for the confrontation phase of the battle when SAM and ZSU-23-4 systems have been reduced to bearable levels.

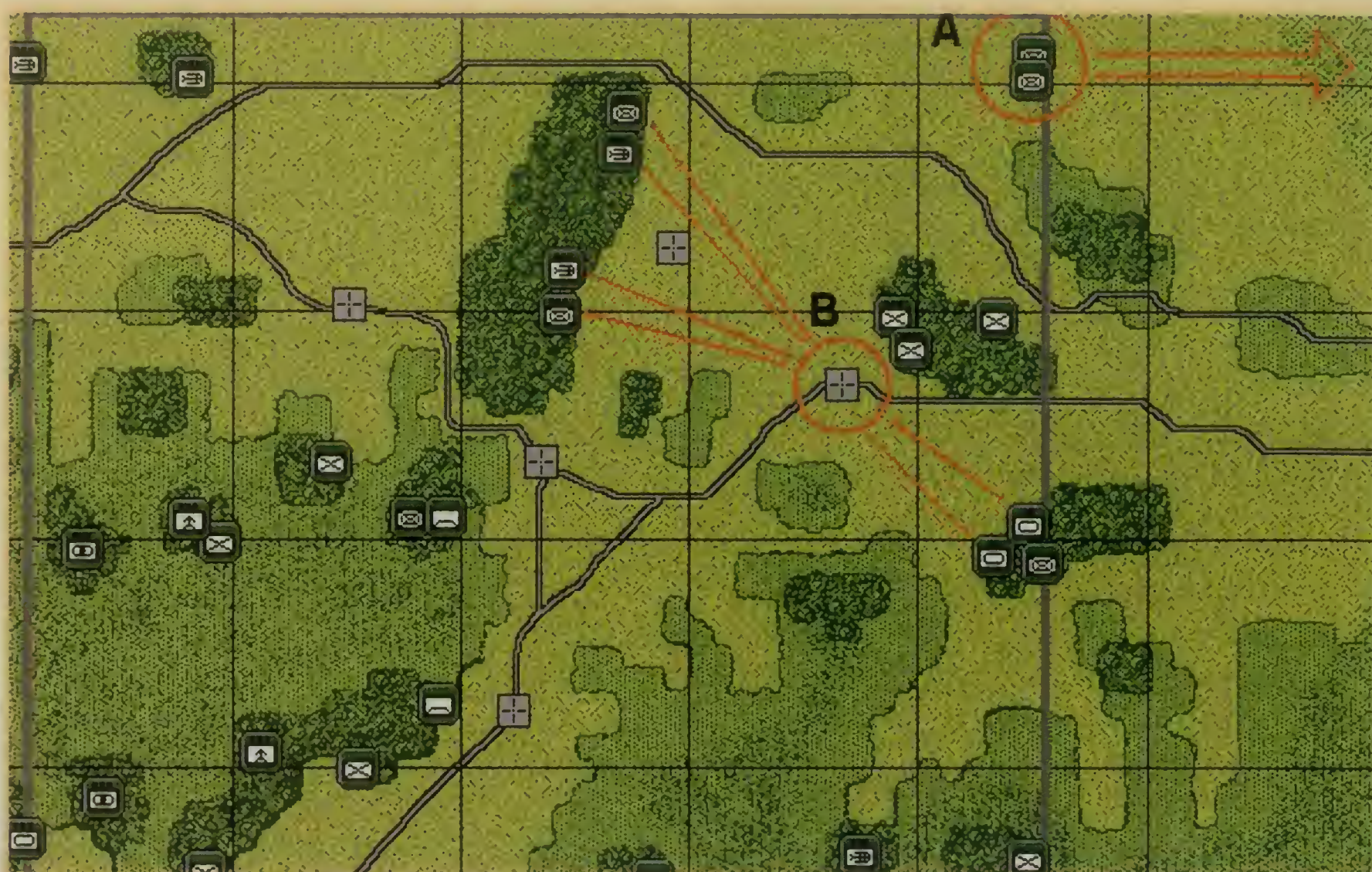
Ambush

Once the enemy has been dispersed we can begin to consider how to engage selected OPFOR elements. When preparing and executing an ambush there are a few things to consider.

Make sure your units are in covered terrain. Although they may look like they are in the woods symbology you've selected, press Ctrl+I just to make sure; we wouldn't want your ambush compromised now would we?

Plan to engage the enemy at ranges suitable for your weapons. While it may be neat to set up a kill-zone 3 clicks out consisting of M1s and M2s, the M1s aren't going to have a dickens of a chance of hitting anything.

Check weapon info and probability of hit (pH) values before you plan your ambush. Set all ambushing units engagement ranges to zero. Up until the time of the ambush their primary responsibility is to keep quiet and not draw attention to themselves. When you want to execute your ambush, shift the fire control up to the appropriate range. Make sure you assign priority targets; if you want your M-1 section to target the leading BMPs



The initial setup in the northern sector with the scouts at A preparing to head east and the ambush kill-zone at B

then make sure they know what to do!

Pre-register artillery fire on potential ambush sites. More often than not passengers on-board BTRs and BMPs may survive the ambush and be in a position to call in artillery on your positions. If you have some pre-registered HE missions available, you can time these to arrive just after the ambush starts. This should suppress/eliminate these

survivors, allowing your ambushers to withdraw in relative safety.

Insure that enough firepower can be brought to bear on the ambush site to deal with the enemy. If you're expecting to face a company of BMPs make sure you have enough systems to deal with the dozen or so tracks you'll encounter. With your units positioned in covered terrain you will usually get

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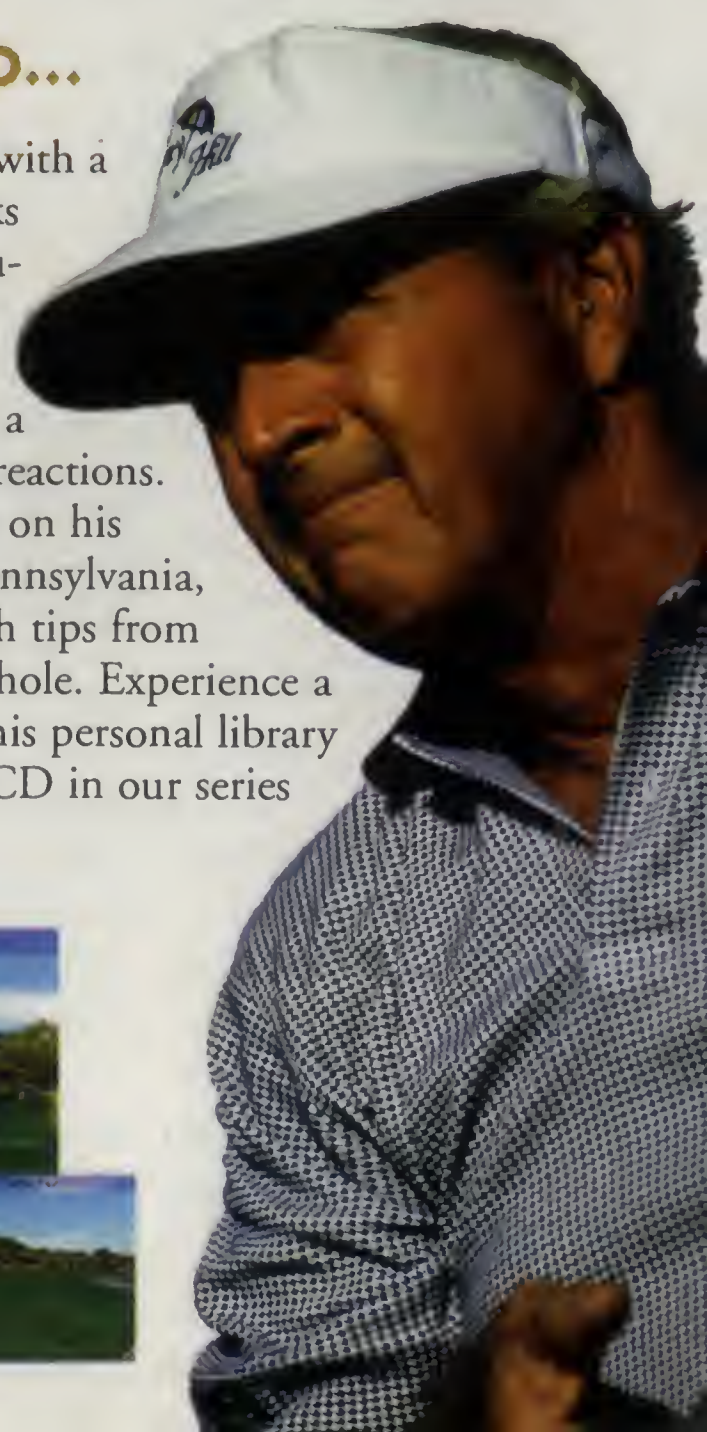


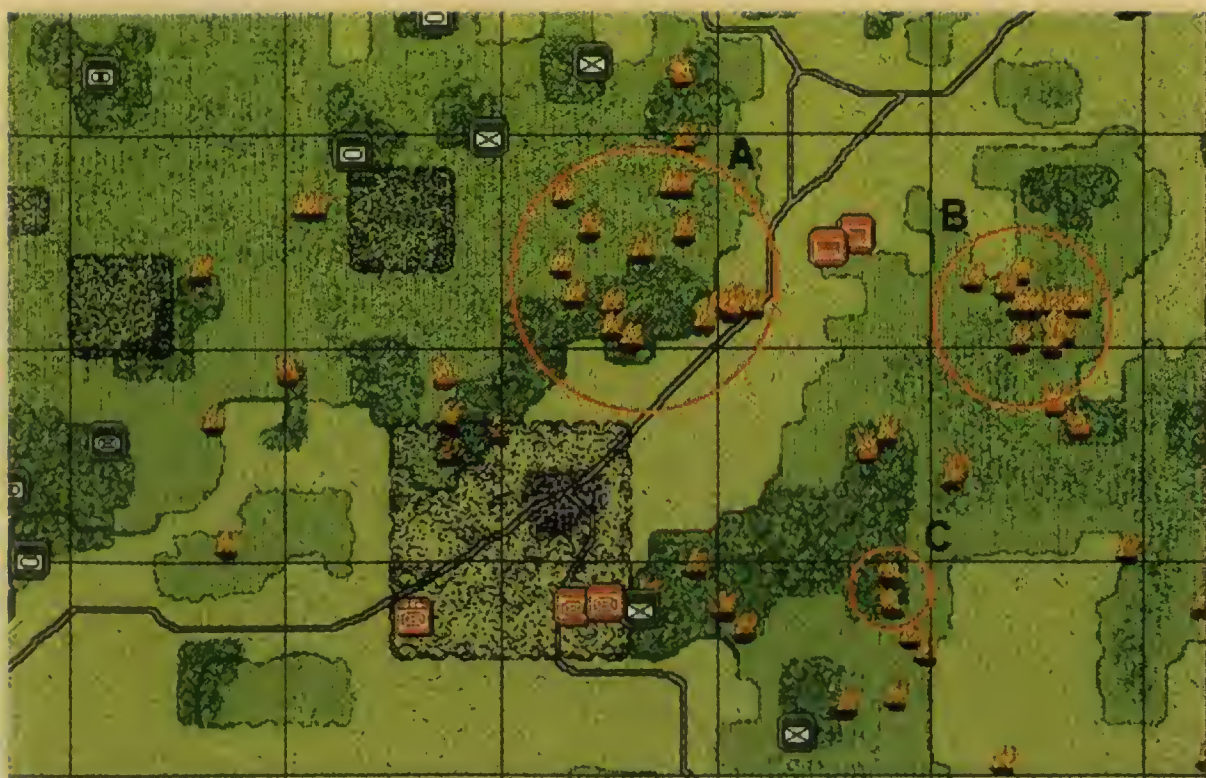
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1	Inf Scout Team	4	Inf Team
19	M1A2 Tank	18	Inf Squad
8	M2 Bradley	5	PKM MG Team
12	Inf Team	5	AGS17 Team
16	Javelin ATGM	2	SA16 SAM
3	M106 Mortar Carrier		
7	155mm SP Hwtzr		
1	M113 APC		
2	Stinger SAM		

Top: The battlefield at scenario end. Note the impressive ambush sites at A and B. Unfortunately delaying forces to the south-east were overwhelmed just as ambush B was triggered resulting in two platoons of M2's being caught in a cross-fire at C

Bottom: OB's after the battle. The OPFOR force has been virtually wiped out! The US lethality index still remains high due to the high percentage of surviving M1 and Javelin systems

a free shot at the enemy before he spots you; kill 'em all and you won't even have to relocate (although this may still be a wise option.)

If you only wish to execute a fire and withdraw ambush (say with a M901 platoon covering force) make sure you set your SOP to withdraw immediately after firing. If they're positioned far enough into the woods they'll probably escape to fight another day.

Plan final ambush sites just in front of the enemy objective(s) and gradually withdraw towards them as the enemy advances; you will use these final positions to commence the final phase of the battle: confrontation.

Confrontation

It's come to the crunch. OPFOR is several clicks away from their objective and/or you have no room left to maneuver. You're going to have to engage the enemy in detail. With a bit

of skill and luck, you should have reduced the enemy to parity or better, giving you a fighting chance during this final phase of the battle.

Remember your victory conditions! If you need to stop 80% of OPFOR units then you can quite happily allow the excess to march merrily off the map (you can assume there are friendly reserves present in your rear areas to deal with such occurrences).

Treat the confrontation phase as you would any other ambush, however this time there's no bugging out: you're going to have to stay in place and fight it out to the bitter end! Position your ambushing units in such a way that every available unit can readily reach the kill-zone with a high-enough pH.

Call in all your surviving support assets! Pre-register your artillery at this site before OPFOR arrives; use a couple of your initial TRPs or register some shots during the initial phases of the game to provide quicker artillery response. Plan your air strikes to arrive at roughly the same time as the ambush commences. The idea here is to project as much firepower as possible onto the remaining OPFOR units, thus giving your defenders an edge in the immediately following fire-fight. With a bit of luck (and some minor intervention from a deity of your choice) you should emerge victorious!

Well that's all for now. If you have any questions on this article (or just like to heckle) then drop me a line at filthy@acslink.net.au or at CIS:100242,3423. ■

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X
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Reader Service No. 2

Hail to the King, baby

Duke Nukem 3D

Formgen

DOS



Here we are, four years down the road, and finally we have a game that is better than *Doom*. Despite claims otherwise, *Duke Nukem 3D* is an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, advance in the 3D action game genre. Unfortunately, *Duke* plays it too safe by taking no chances in gameplay. It does, however, increase the violence and technology in such a manner that is sure to impress even the most jaded gamers out there. It's also wildly entertaining, albeit with a few caveats.

The plot ranks up there with the classics. Aliens have landed in Los Angeles, and Duke Nukem is there to protect the chicks. Blast your way through 28 levels and you'll drive the bad guys back home, at least until the sequel. Navigate various levels, shooting everything in sight, and you'll end up with, well, cramped wrists, and perhaps a thirst for more (if that's the case, build your own levels with the included "Build Engine" editor).

The included levels vary wildly between stunning and merely average. The early levels of the first episode are by far the best of the game. This is one of the few 3D games which manages to represent a real world environment with any degree of success. The theater, the disco and the porn shop are a refreshing change of pace from the endless stream of dungeons and alien worlds (they've got those here too, and to be blunt, they're rather dull). All of the environments distinguish themselves by being more interactive than those found in lesser games. Hate that vending machine? Blow it up. Take a leak in the toilet, then blow it up (*Duke Nukem, 3D Plumber*).

The weapons are one of the main reasons people play these things (it's a Freudian thing, for sure). *Duke's* arsenal isn't all that impressive, with the requisite shotgun, pistols and rocket launchers. The tripwire (useful only in multi-player mode) and pipe bombs are interesting, but certainly not revolutionary.

One of *Duke's* main improvements over *Doom* and its ilk is its sense of humor – the first time *Duke* yells out "No one steals our chicks... and lives" you'll be laughing out loud. Or maybe not. How about, "It's time to kick ass and chew bubble gum, and I'm all outta gum." Less funny are the occasions when Duke runs into a room and starts killing female strippers and prostitutes. While it could be argued that they add strategy, due to the fact that hitting them causes more



[1] Target friends for fun and sport in the stadium, the best level for massive DukeMatch carnage, [2] Step up to the mic, Duke... more like "Born to be Mild," [3] One of the usual end-game bad guys. [4] Danger lurks around every corner...

aliens to appear (ooh, more killing – *there's* a real deterrent in a game like this), many rooms are designed in such a manner that it's unavoidable. Besides, the whole point of the game is to kill everything in sight.

The problem here isn't so much the *existence* of strippers and prostitutes in a game, but that there's no logical reason for them to be there (let's see, everyone is dead or captured except for Duke, a few hookers and strippers? Guess the aliens aren't into silicone and steroids...). If there were a bunch of innocent humans running around the earth-bound locations, too, it would make a helluva lot more sense. The sole presence of such soft-porn wanna-be's in the game, however, comes across instead as just crass and sleazy; most importantly, it does nothing to improve the game. It's as if the 3D Realms guys sat around a table and said, "Let's figure out how we can offend people so more people will buy our game. Nothing sells like controversy." It's an extremely cynical marketing ploy, and it works. Sex and violence has its place in games, just as it does in life, but you have to wonder about putting such things in a game clearly targeted at testosterone-laced

adolescents (imagine kids everywhere going, "huh huh, I can shoot strippers... cool").

Gameplay is ultimately what we're interested in, and in this area, *Duke* is the king. But so what? If 3D Realms really wants to impress us, they can move beyond this type of gameplay. Because as good as *Duke* is (and make no mistake, it's *really* good), you just can't help but think that someone needs to take this genre to another level, kind of like those guys called id did back in '92. Have any of these games really changed from *Wolfenstein 3D*? Perhaps that's part of their appeal – their familiarity. Kind of like the buddy flick and the romance novel, nothing really changes, but that doesn't stop people from spending their money on them. If you really messed with the formula, would everyone rejoice over your innovation or would they merely say they liked the old way better? Who knows, certainly not 3D Realms, who are milking the genre for all its worth.

– Steve Bauman

Duke Nukem 3D has proven to be quite a controversial game around the office. It seems that everyone has an opinion about it. Here's everyone's thoughts on it, as well as their rating.

★★★★★

Who's going to argue with the gameplay here? It's superb. The big question is going to be, "How much does the mixture of sex and violence offend you?" Those of you who are (more or less) adults should have no problem with the strippers in the game – indeed, you could argue that avoiding them while killing off all the aliens adds another layer of complexity. And when you hand them a dollar and they pull open their bikini top to display their assets (still modestly covered by pasties), you, too may get a little chuckle. The biggest concern is that the game is being distributed as shareware, so any twelve year old can download it. There's nothing wrong with creating games for an adult audience, as long as we take measures to keep 'em out of the hands of kids. – Peter Smith

★★★☆☆

Sigh. They take the advanced new "Build" game engine, and this is what they produce? Instead of a game that adds something to the genre (as *Heretic* did – loved the atmosphere in that game), they re-use *Doom*'s one-guy-against-alien-hordes storyline and throw in some cheap soft porn to make it "adult." Nothing original here folks, and the "women as sex objects" theme (the only way the game seems to portray women) is truly offensive (they could have made them characters with actions of their own, but no – there they stand, in the middle of a firefight, rooted in place). I also suspect police won't be thrilled by the fact that you must shoot aliens in LA Police uniforms – more questionable imagery. – Scott Udell

★★★★☆☆

Turn down the estrogen levels, folks, it's time for sweatin' and shootin' and totin' them big guns. I remember the original *Duke-of-ancient-times*, and the gameplay here has evolved twice full circle. It's *Doom* plus kitsch in a much more interesting set of environments. And our hero... well, ol' Duke is more full of himself than anyone can stand, so much so that you can't help but shake your head and smile ("*Damn, I look goooood*"). And the demolished aliens explode and spatter so... tastefully.

Family values activists and feminists of all genders are bound to be offended (as am I, for the most part). Somehow, though, it manages to be great fun. It's sleazy and slimy and blood-soaked and oozes testosterone and is insulting to women and the sensitive-natured average Fred. Run out and buy it today (I don't believe I hear myself saying this)... – Cindy Yans

★★★★☆☆

Kurt Vonnegut once said that if Fascism ever comes to America, it'll come wrapped in the American flag. I think that if truly 3D interactivity ever arrives in computer gaming, it'll come wrapped in a haze of sleazy sex, violence and over-the-top, exaggerated macho. Whoops, it already has. The game would be hilarious, if it weren't also such a sad waste of a concept with truly revolutionary potential. As for the Strippers 'R Us, if you need this for



Assault Rigs

excitement, it's definitely time to take up folk dancing or something and meet some real people. Great fun once you turn your brain and soul off, though. – Steve Wartofsky

In Pursuit of Greed

Softdisk

DOS

★★★½☆☆

Doom clone #13,357. Well, not *exactly* a clone. *In Pursuit of Greed* does deviate ever-so-slightly from the tragically tired *Doom* formula. First off, the levels are set up as missions, with the player being forced to retrieve certain items instead of merely finding an exit (said exit appears when you've retrieved enough things). The level design is repetitive in the extreme, but there are three distinct worlds to kill things in, each featuring different creatures. Like *Hexen*, you can choose different starting characters, each of which start with different weapons and skills.

There are even a couple of features *Greed* has that others don't. First up is the legendary "A.S.S. cam" (huh huh, he said "ass"), which allows you to see behind you. Second, the monsters and items regenerate throughout a level, which may or may not be a good thing.

None of this really elevates *In Pursuit of Greed* beyond being another 3D shooter, just as forgettable as the previous 13,356. It doesn't suck, but it doesn't really stand out, either.

– Steve Bauman

Assault Rigs

Psygnosis

DOS

★★★½☆☆

Let's put this to rest right away. *Assault Rigs* is *not* a game about tanks. The vehicles here may look tank-like, but they don't behave much like tanks. Most notably, they slide from side to side, and the only time their turrets move is when you pick up a special powerup.

The few places the tank-ness of the vehicles shines through, like when you hit a ramp off center and flip your vehicle over, are pretty entertaining. Plenty of powerups are sprinkled about to keep the action pumping, and there're network (up to 8 players) and serial multi-player options.



Gearheads



In Pursuit of Greed

That's the good news.

Now for the bad. The controls are twitchy. You'll spend way too much time overshooting a target when drawing a bead, or overshooting a ramp when moving. The graphics are poor. This is a matter of personal taste, of course, but the visuals lack a certain crispness. Lastly, the views will drive you crazy. Granted, there are a lot of them, but no single view works well all the time.

The bottom line? The controls are sloppy, the graphics are sloppy and the camera views are sloppy. Three strikes and you're out. *Assault Rigs* isn't a bad game, but neither is it anything special – it's destined to be lost in the sea of mediocrity.

– Peter Smith

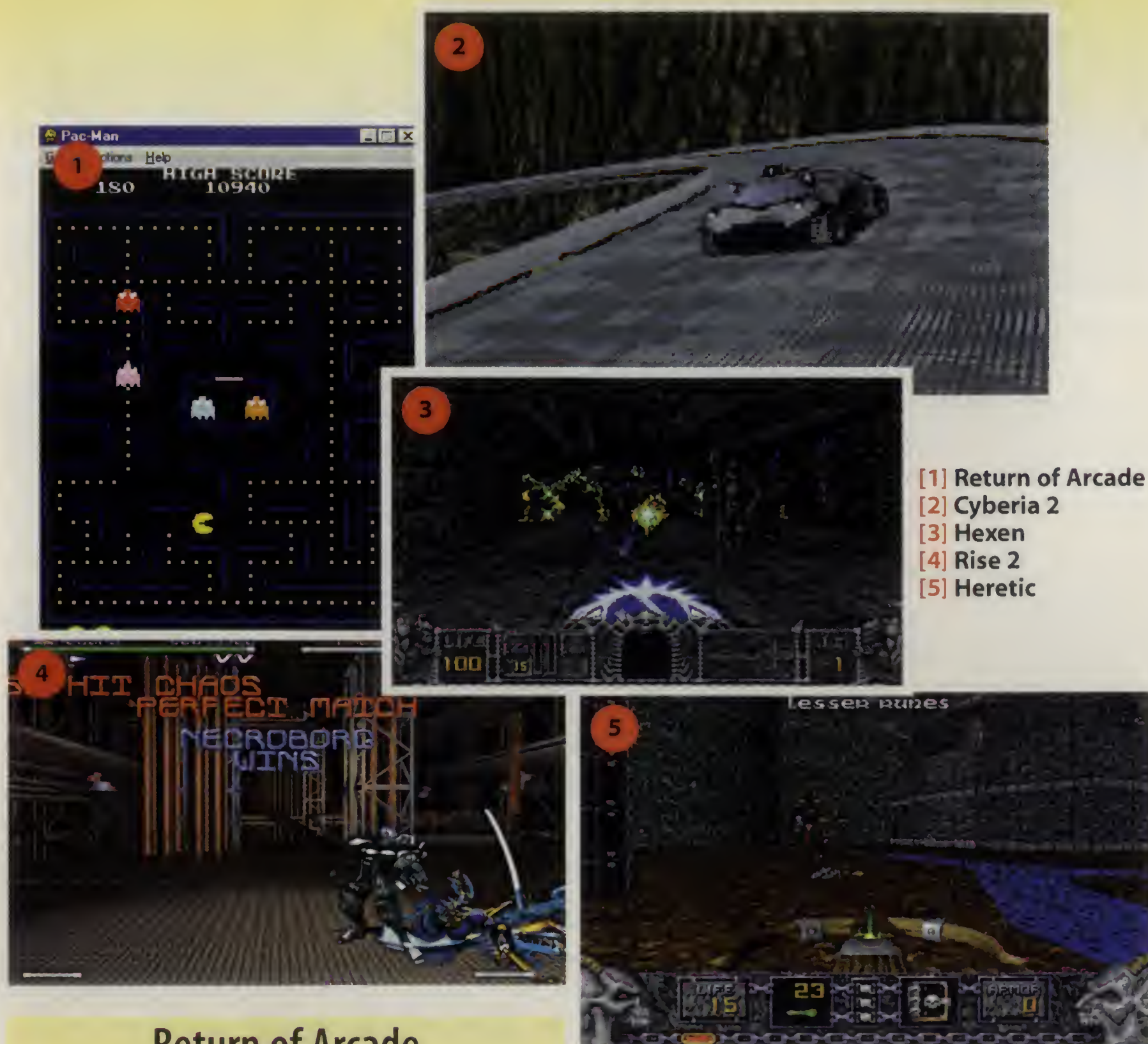
Gearheads

Philips

Windows

★★★★★

This is the kind of game there should be more of, especially for Windows, especially for newcomers to computer gaming. It's exactly what the subtitle says it is, "a furious war of wind-up toys." The animation for all the included toys are marvelous, and the tactics for each one are distinctly different. It's got all the fun of a *Command and Conquer*-style real-time tactical game (scaled down dramatically, of course), with all the AI that game never had. Notice, for instance, that as you change which "toys" you send across the board, the computer responds almost immediately with interesting and appropriate counter-strikes; notice that if you pile up a bunch of toys across the top of the board, the computer will try to do an end-run around you. More turn-based strategy games, even, should have this kind of AI versatility; most – either real-time or turn-based – unfortunately do not. – Steve Wartofsky



- [1] Return of Arcade
- [2] Cyberia 2
- [3] Hexen
- [4] Rise 2
- [5] Heretic

Return of Arcade

Microsoft

Windows 95

★ ★ ★ ½ ☆

Whoa, talk about flashbacks, and we're not talking those chemically-related ones that feature cardboard chickens pecking out your eyeballs (fans of *Reefer Madness* will get this – others will assume that this article was written under the influence of said chemicals). Microsoft's *Return of Arcade* is a welcome addition to the trend toward retro-gaming. In fact, it's a welcome addition to any fan of arcade games.

The game includes arcade-perfect renditions of *Pac Man*, *Galaxian*, *Dig Dug* and *Pole Position*. The latter is the lamest of the bunch – racing games like *Pole Position* tend to age quicker than a great shooter like *Galaxian*. All of the games use the sounds, and much of the programming, of the original games, meaning players who've memorized the routes in *Pac Man* should be able to dominate the home version as well.

What makes this such an essential package is that the games are tiny (around 6 MB on the hard drive), do not require a CD-ROM (in fact, the game ships on floppy disks – remember those?), can be played by a keyboard or mouse and all run under Windows 95 (only). In other words, we're talking the perfect game for a laptop. Alternately, they make better diversions than *Solitaire* for those of us who like a little game in between phone calls or any other "serious" business work. —S.B.

Cyberia 2: Resurrection

Xatrix

DOS

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Not to be confused with *Rise 2: Resurrection* (wonderful, a new trend alert – resurrection games), *Cyberia 2* continues the story of Zak, the man with the rendered head and groovy blade sunglasses, as he battles some sort of nasty guy. A rail-shooter (you don't really control your movement – you're just along for the ride, targeting and firing), *Cyberia 2* features fewer of the logic puzzles that helped its predecessor transcend some of the inherent limitations of the genre (like you never feel you're in control, or that the visuals are pretty but the gameplay is weak).

Overall, though, those visuals do end up winning you over. This is the finest rendered cut scene you'll ever play. Many of the action sequences are incredibly chaotic, and you sort of have to admire their simplicity (point, shoot, point, shoot). The pseudo-3D *Doom*-style segments don't work well – you view the action from over Zak's shoulder, and they usually just turn into boring mazes. But when you're flying and driving around, blowing everything up in, you may think that you'd rather be in control of your destination, but you'll probably be too busy admiring the scenery and blasting bad guys. It's a dumb game (some of the dialogue is laughably bad), but it's dumb in a fun sort of way. —S.B.

Heretic: Shadow of the Serpent Riders

id software

DOS

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

Hexen: Deathkings of the Dark Citadel

id software

DOS

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Enough already. Just release *Quake*, OK. Please?

The first "commercial" release of *Heretic* comes a year or so too late, as it's little more than *Doom* minus the ominous sense of evil. *Shadow of the Serpent Riders* is basically two new levels, "The Ossuary" and "The Stagnant Demesne" (love those names). Both of the levels are well designed, but you can download (for free) any number of equally clever levels.

What makes the *Heretic* package less appealing is the existence of *Hexen*, which added multiple character classes and featured improved visuals and – and here's the key – a sense of impending doom (no pun intended). *Deathkings of the Dark Citadel* requires the full version of *Hexen* and gives you 20 new levels to muck around in, plus some special deathmatch levels. As usual, they're clever and extremely difficult, but isn't it about time to move on. —S.B.

Rise 2: Resurrection

Acclaim

DOS, Windows 95

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Rise 2: Resurrection is the much superior sequel to the dismal *Rise of the Robots*. This futuristic 2D fighter sports 18 playable robots, two bosses and several secret characters. Play control is a cross between *Street Fighter 2* and *Mortal Kombat 3*, and while special moves can be trying and despite the PC's lackluster control pad support (especially for two players), the game plays quite well. *Rise 2* contains incredibly fluid, realistic character animation and fantastic graphics. The game offers the usual round of special attacks (like fireballs and flying uppercuts), and even *MK*-like Executions. There was a noticeable lack of cinematic sequences, and the special moves were rehashed throughout. Overall, a decent choice for fans of the genre—especially those who are sick of *MK3*, but like the graphic appeal of that game. —Jason D'Aprile

"A perfect 10!" — Computer Player
"Out of 5 stars" — PC Entertainment

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When the smoke cleared

The hip boot –or– why we're still high on E3

A lot of unsolicited attention is heaped upon visitors at large media events. Members of the press are particularly targeted, and in order to properly identify us at E3 (highlighted in this issue), they forced us to wear red foam clown noses, plaid vests and rubber hip boots. Thus properly attired, I was accosted by, among others, an I-Motion gangster, two men in fig leaves, and the Cat in the Hat. But I missed Bruce Jenner and Alex Trebek. So much for the glitterati.

Given the multitude of upcoming products, it has been impossible to highlight more than ten or so in our regular coverage, so I'd like to talk a bit about just a few items that (in addition to our feature highlights) continue to intrigue.

The action cube of *Blast Chamber*, by Activision, looks totally addictive as one to four players battle it out in what seems to be some warped conglomeration of scenarios from *American Gladiators*. It's fast, it's furious, it's tearing around in a 3-D cube-shaped obstacle course playing against time and running for your life. It's *Steal the Flag* cyber-commando style and I want to play it again today. Of course it's possible that *anything* demonstrated on a five-or-so foot square screen might be imposing, but I still have faith in this one.

After the initial grimace and yawn when MGM proudly announced yet another 3rd person 3-D shooter, I slid some toothpicks between my eyelids and wondered which exit line to use...when all of a sudden, there was *Cyberthug*, the shooter with a sense of humor and yes, yes, satire — right there at the edge of his morphin' right arm. Cyberthug — hero of the internet and protector of innocent programs everywhere (Holy Klong-Spak-VZZZZ!). The player is challenged to 10 missions, which drag real-life entities through the mire: bank managers, government lobbyists, calculator tape wielding CPA's, the FBI...no one is safe! It's hard to say how the gameplay will hold out, but kudos for koncept.

Even still I yodel torch songs in memory of Ron Gilbert. Oh sure, we know he lives. And sure, we know he lives in kiddie land...but



[1]Cyberthug's guide to fashion dos and don'ts for federal agents [2]Artists at Humonguous have captured Sam as a child possessed - complete with red blankie [3]The Neverhood: an unsuspecting wad of clay finds his ass in peril

memories of *Monkey Island* shine through even the gloomiest thoughts of cute and cheerful characters aimed at ages 3-7. Adults are waiting in the wings, and one of the Humonguous Entertainment staff even fanned our flames with the news that Ron *really is* entertaining the idea of a title for those of us leaps and bounds away from potty training. Astoundingly beautiful artwork and animation are afoot at Humonguous... *Pajama Sam*, for instance, steals their 1996 show. I went to the Humonguous exhibit to oooh and ahhh at the artwork, to see what was up, but mostly to stare at Ron and hope he stops for awhile to scratch the itch of the loyal.

And speaking of kid-dom, there is still a debate here as to whether DreamWorks' *The Neverhood: A Curious Wad of Klay Finds His Soul* is aimed primarily at children or not. "Targeted for game players of all ages," cajoles the press release...Well, targeted or not, I'm very interested in following this title, because the look of the game is totally engaging...kinda like the stellar *Gumby cum Duckman meets Davy & Goliath* (surely you've seen it). The world of *Neverhood* has been created from over three tons of clay, and sixty-five tons of overactive imagination. Promising an estimated forty hours

of gameplay my guess is that they're *not* looking at the short attention span of the rugrat set.

Finally, and missing from general highlights only because we had already done some early coverage, is Legend's *Callahan's Crosstime Saloon*. Legend's booth was literally wallpapered with subtle and detailed artwork from the game, which promises to be a humorous but gentle treatment of material based on author Spider Robinson's *Callahan's* books. Designer Josh Mandel (*Phreddy Pharkas*, *Space Quest VI*) seems to be going for the spontaneous laugh and appreciative smile rather than the raucous guffaw in this outing, and the going looks good. This is less a sci-fi romp than a character-based story, but *what* characters...thrill to Ralph the talking dog and his sister Tina; and Sasha from Transylvania — she's wealthy, but cursed. Robinson's only directive — "Don't make Callahan skinny" — gives the creative staff somewhat free reign with the license, and I believe the talent is there to make it work. Besides, there's magic at Legend...always has been.

Meanwhile, I lied. They didn't make us wear rubber hip boots...or clown noses...or vests — only dangling peach-colored ribbons. But they were *chic* peach-colored ribbons. ■



Callahan's futureworld - where tasteful license plates abound, and Igloo Bars are a dime a dozen

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Not gonna happen.



Anvil of Dawn discoveries

Ol' Unca Andy's mythical Inn and spell of last resort for solving adventure puzzles. If all else fails, just re-boot! Heh-heh...



W e gamers don't have the big numbers on our side, yet, but at least we don't have to be ashamed that we're doing something nasty that kids do.

Lost in the Andy's

Bewildered continues his story about the search for Toaster's treasure.

So, there we were in the valley of square rock eggs. Eggs to the left, eggs to the right, we were surrounded by eggs. What does it mean, I thought, a square-egg? And then it hit me. Battered tried to juggle three of the eggs and one of them broke on my head. A rock squawked and we were surrounded by angry, flapping, square rock chickens.

What a predicament! Luckily we were rescued by square rock people who owned the square rock eggs. It seems we had stumbled into Square Rock Café. We told the rockers that we were looking for Toaster. It seems that he had flown through, but they wouldn't tell us to where until we beta tested their new virtual reality soft rock computer game.

Who were these guys? They were square rock software developers. We were in Silicon Square Rock Valley! Anyway, so we beta tested. What a strange game they had created. It was called *God's Dilemma*.

Sorry to interrupt, Bewildered, but

it's time to let Bashed and Battered out of the dungeon. We'll continue your story next month.

Hot & Not

Zork: Nemesis was by far the most popular adventure game during Derby month and deservedly so. It's got an interesting story, challenging puzzles and it's state of the art in graphics and sound. I'm especially fond of being able to turn a full circle while looking around in the game.

Yendorian Tales Book I Chapter Two (ver 1.11) was the most popular role playing game. It's shareware but with better than usual graphics. It looks and plays much like *Might and Magic III* (first-person 3D perspective). Download it from Library 9 of Gamers on CompuServe or write to: Smithware, 6445 Westgate, Ft. Worth, TX, 76180-4705. Another pair of shareware role-playing games you might want to download from Gamers are *Exile I* and *II*. They're more primitive graphically, but are quite satisfying.

Heh-heh homily

The word is spreading: computer games aren't just for kids. The average gamer is approximately thirty years old and male. Isn't that interesting? About as interesting as *Myst* now having sold two million copies (I

wonder how many people actually have played the game. I'd suspect at least four million by the number of messages I've seen). The point is, it's getting to be more and more respectable to play computer games. Great, huh?

Don't get me wrong. It's not as respectable as playing baseball, for example or being a Doctor. We gamers don't have the big numbers on our side, yet, but at least we don't have to be ashamed that we're doing something nasty that kids do – like read comic-books! Heh-heh.

Beyond the pail

Brett Parker writes: *Hi Unca! I have a question about that neat-o dungeon crawl Stonekeep: can I use the orbs as much as I want or do they have a set number of charges?*

Brett, most of the orbs can be used only twice per level. The mapping orb (looks like Saturn) has unlimited charges.

Anvil of Dawn

This role-playing adventure was my second favorite of 1995. It was Rocky's and many others' top pick. To begin, it's best to select the Chinese mage and modify his statistics to four Strength, four Stamina, three Agility and nine Power.

Lack of malice in the palace

There are a few wall buttons in the Grand Palace that open doors but there are no other puzzles and no combat. First talk to



[1] *Zork: Nemesis* was by far the most popular adventure game during Derby month

[2] *Yendor II* looks and plays much like *Might and Magic III*

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Anvil of Dawn

- [1] Select "slashing" when the Armorer offers a choice of weapons
- [2] Push the large stone block onto the pressure plate
- [3] Freeze the monsters in Gryphon Keep with the Shackles of Ice spell and then hack them to death with the sword
- [4] Outside, Parsafal waits

the Court Magician (select *water* when he offers a choice of spells), the Armorer (select *slashing* when he offers a choice of weapons) and finally Master Azariah. Azariah opens the void gate to Gryphon Keep, and advises you to search for the Mage of the Dark Lantern.

Gryphon Keep conundrums

Freeze the monsters in Gryphon Keep with the Shackles of Ice spell (looks like a snowflake) and then hack them to death with the sword. The Laughing Skull can be avoided by following it and ducking into the next alcove. Killing Thanes in the basement provides the two keys needed to open the locked gates (the other gates open by stepping on pressure plates or pushing nearby wall switches). Talk to Lord Gryphon (the prisoner) to get his signet ring.

Upstairs, on the main level, follow the hall to the north, killing more Thanes, and pick up an empty sack (good for carrying stones to put on pressure plates) a helmet and a key. Go up the stairs to explore the northwest tower. Back on the main level, follow the hall south, past the rolling boulder, east and then south to find the stairs to explore the southwest tower. Stand on the second pressure plate near the door and toss a stone onto the first pressure plate. There's a

wall button in the room with the tables. Push it and a path is opened to a chest with a blue draught of Heightened Magic Power (there's another along with an orange draught of Heightened Mortality in the northeast tower).

Save and use the draught. Restore and try again if your spell points haven't increased by at least seventy-five. One hundred spell points are possible but very rare. The orange potion boosts hit points by one to ten. Don't leave the southwest tower without The Heavenly Mend spell. Other items in the Keep include a suit of 10% protection armor, a shield and a broad-bladed spear (a better weapon than the sword, it is guarded by an oriental fighter).

Step on the two pressure plates along the wall in the northeast tower and push the wall button to open the way to the spell and hit point draughts. The non-rolling boulder rolls after you push its wall button (go east past the corridor leading to the boulder and turn right after the locked door). The shield is behind the locked door (it opens after pushing the boulder's button). The round hole in the wall of the southeast tower takes a coin. It opens a door to a spell point restoration altar.

Along a east/west hall in the north are a series of five doors, three which need keys with the eastern-most door opening only

after the pressure plates in the next room are weighted down with stones. Push the two large stone blocks onto nearby pressure plates. One opens the gate leading to the stairs to the southeast tower. The other opens up a door east that leads to the outside exit.

Dark Lantern directives

Outside (one giant step forward) to the right, Parsafal waits. He'll give you directions to the Dark Lantern (go east). He'll also give you a bag of coins after you've given him the signet ring (a dialogue choice).

Cast Heavenly Mend to restore the bridge and then enter the first level of the Dark Lantern. Put stones on the two pressure plates in the first room to vanish the teleport and open the gate. Flip all switches as you find them (they should all end up in the down position) Push the square boulder onto a nearby pressure plate. Go through the flashing wall. Go upstairs to level two.

Partir, c'est mourir un peu

I'll be back next month with more malevolent molestations and malignancies. In the meantime, request assistance in solving adventure puzzles from Unca at Computer Games Strategy Plus or 71202,3451 on CompuServe (71202.3451@compuserve.com).

Feeling a little... Uncivilized?

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"The fate of thousands is in your hands!"

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Computer Game Review

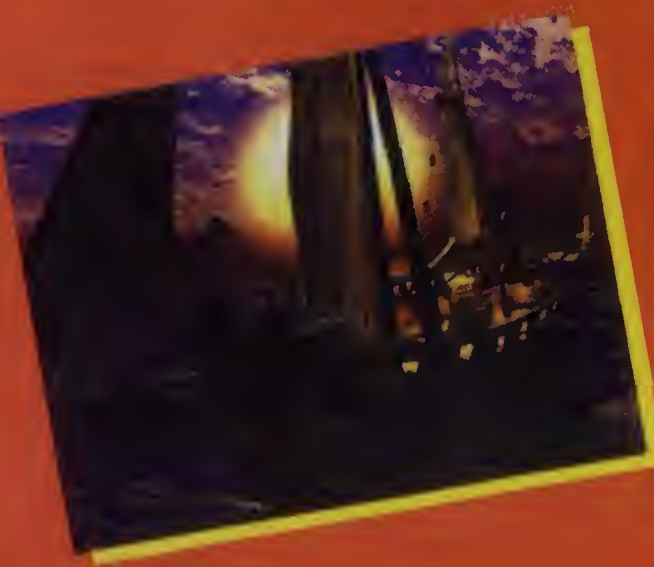
“All in all, Settlers II looks like a substantial improvement on an already excellent gaming system.”

Strategy Plus, June '96

“A must for fans of the original and gamers who like God sims.”

PC Power, April '96

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A slow month

Star Trek Klingon

Simon & Schuster Interactive

Windows

★ ★ ½ ☆ ☆

While billed as “the ultimate interactive adventure,” adventure gamers beware – *Star Trek Klingon* has less in common with *A Final Unity* or *Harbinger* than it does with Simon & Schuster’s earlier Trek reference titles. The three-CD package is broken into two separate programs: the Language Lab wherein you learn basic Klingon phrases and bits and pieces about Klingon culture, and the Immersion Studies CDs, the “game” part of the set.

The Language Lab is, as bizarre as this may sound, more of an educational tool than anything else. A Klingon-ish user interface lets you explore a variety of aspects of the Klingon language, and drills let you test your knowledge with English to Klingon text translation, audio translation, etc. The biggest draw to the Language Lab is its voice recognition capabilities: using a fully Soundblaster-compatible card with a microphone you can run your throat ragged testing out your pronunciation of Klingon words and phrases. You can even get evaluated on your pronunciation (of course, who’s to say how well the program’s voice recognition works; I don’t have any Klingon friends, do you?).

The Immersion Studies segment purports to put you in a holodeck training scenario wherein you take on the role of Pok, a young Klingon out to investigate his father’s death. Trek detailists will love the fact that you can pause the video to click on many of the Klingon items to get an excruciatingly detailed description. The game part is the weakest part of the package: as the video plays out you are given chances to choose a response appropriate to the situation (although it’s rarely obvious what the choices are and how they apply to the situation). Choose the wrong option and someone will probably yell at you (they’re Klingon, after all) and you’ll be sent back to an earlier time-stop in the video to try again. A major flaw here is that you can’t skip the video you’ve already seen, which means you may have to watch a sequence over and over until you click (or don’t click) on the appropriate person or thing.

Trek fans (especially Klingon fans) will probably enjoy this title, but folks looking for a gaming experience should stay parsecs away from this one.

—Scott Udell

BrainDead 13

ReadySoft

DOS, Windows 95

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

Think the word interactive and the antithesis of it is often a game from ReadySoft, the interactive cartoon studio behind adventure misfires such as *Dragon’s Lair*. Their latest toon offering is *BrainDead 13*, an entirely in-house animated production featuring a teenage hipster who rushes around a sinister castle being chased by a half-human beast, Fritz. Define interactive in this title? Pick one of four directions for the character to move in, and watch a fifteen second animation clip unravel. Gaming is a careful balance between art and science: *BrainDead 13* is an artistic masterpiece, but in regards to the intricate science of gameplay, a certified flop.

—Geoff M. Keighley

D

Acclaim

DOS

★ ½ ☆ ☆ ☆

D is for the daughter that you control as you try and find out why your father massacred a bunch of people. *D* is for delirium, which is something that the wonderfully surreal visuals and over-the-top music manage to capture. Finally, *D* is for devilishly dumb design decisions, because conceptually this game is so flawed you have wonder what were they

thinking when they designed it.

It’s main problem is that it’s two hours long. Literally. You have two real-time hours to finish – if you don’t get to the end, the game is over and you’ll have to start over. What about restoring a saved game? No such luck. There are no saved games. Assuming you fail the first time you play the game, you get to play the whole thing again. And again. And again. If you solve it the first time, you’ve just spent \$40 on less than two hours of fun. Overall, the game gets an extra star for weirdness and cool visuals, but that’s not nearly enough to label it anything but a *Disaster*.

—Steve Bauman

Chaos: A Fantasy Adventure Game

Harper Collins Interactive

Windows, Macintosh

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Chaos theory is a complex branch of physics and mathematics which explains the order behind the seeming disorder in the universe. This is the background for Harper Collins Interactive’s game entitled *Chaos*. In this highly original and entertaining game; you play a debt-ridden college student who must travel to your uncle Prospero’s house to discuss his new scientific observations; and possibly the future of his wealth. Along the way you traverse eight environments, solve many unique puzzles and interact with eleven intriguing characters. While not at the top of today’s high-tech spectrum, the game offers an engrossing and challenging experience.

—Hermann Peterscheck



[1] Star Trek Klingon [2] D
[3] BrainDead 13 [4] Chaos



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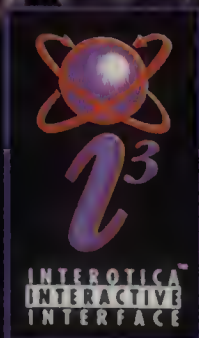
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Zork Nemesis

How I saved the world from a most foul and dread peril

29 Mage 949

As per request of the Grand Chronicler of Frobozzica, herein lies an account of my travels through the Forbidden lands, tentatively entitled:

The Conqueror's Epic

or

How I Saved The World From A Most Foul And Dread Peril, Namely The Naughty Creature Known Only As The Nemesis

I shall present these chronicles in two parts, both for ease of reading and in accordance with the classical form.

Part 1, Canto 1: The Temple of Agrippa

I arrived at the temple, a dreary and moldering place, and proceeded through the main entrance with bold and unfaltering strides. My attention was first arrested by a small mausoleum unconnected to the temple proper; inside, I discovered a coffin containing a highly unusual object, apparently a haunted violin (?), and an apparition that warned of danger inside the temple (I have asked Rogozzio the Sage for his opinions regarding the violin, but as yet he is as perplexed as I).

Imperturbed, I strode to the door and attempted to force it open. This failing miserably, I resorted to using the provided knocker and was both pleased and surprised when the door opened of its own accord.

Once inside, I was assailed by the booming voice of the Nemesis. As the Nemesis had lit-

tle more to offer than common insults, I ignored him and proceeded into a vast library, wherein I read several fascinating works. In one book I learned of the alchemist's four elements – air, water, fire and earth – with their corresponding symbols and planets. There was also a most helpful map of the temple, which I used to navigate myself to a laboratory in the far corner of the temple. The Nemesis began to badger me once again at this juncture, but I ignored his hollow threats and studied the manuals and materials strewn about the room.

Next I proceeded between a pair of delightful fountains – the temple as a whole was rather dreary, but the fountains were quite pleasant – and discovered a great circular room containing four sarcophagi and an altar. Each sarcophagus contained one of the four Missing Citizens of Prominence detailed in Agent L. Bivotar's journal (Archive File A-NEM/FOBLIA). These citizens were plainly visible within their sarcophagi, and they were even capable of speaking to me despite their deceased state, which I found quite unusual; the deceased usually eschew such energetic displays.

From these citizens and the four empty slots on the altar, I determined immediately, if not sooner, that my task was to retrieve all four elements. Child's play, I thought, and set to work.

The quest for fire

After stumbling hither and thither, I

returned to the library and slid aside a series of maps that covered the far wall. By moving them correctly I discovered a passageway. The passageway led to a dial with a man engraved upon it. After spinning the man in various ways, I discovered that the symbol for fire was indeed the key to this puzzle; the door opened, revealing a broken sundial. Just as luck would have it, I had noticed another sundial earlier, from which I procured the blade.

After manipulating the sundial in a certain fashion, a door appeared, admitting me to a nave filled with candles. By cleverly arranging a mirror upon the hooks of this room, I discovered a candle quite different from its fellows; this was the Fire I sought, and I suddenly found myself returned to the altar beside the sarcophagi.

Water, water everywhere

Behind the altar I discovered a curious room with a fountain and a magical statue that played the flute (!). Two stairways led from this room, but through some curious sleight they both led back to the very same room. However, after manipulating the fountain in such a fashion that its sound accorded with that of the miniature flutist, I was able to render the stairways traversable.

Upstairs I discovered a remarkable room with paintings of archaic times. A chair in the center of the room allowed limited time travel, at least within the scope of the room. By sitting in the chair and turning, one could

[1]The dog-cannon, a delightful invention

[2]Suits of armor litter the castle

[3]A curious metal musician



[1] These maps were but a momentary distraction
[2] On my way to the tank



spin back into the past. It was in this very room that I discovered Water, for a window that looked out upon each age allowed me to fetch certain important objects, and after spinning this way and that, fetching objects from the window, I soon had my Water and was returned to the altar.

Journey to the center of the earth

Another back room, guarded by a pair of skeletal hands that opened when an Earth symbol was revealed beneath each, guarded a remarkable stairway. By switching a lever I allowed myself passage to the bottom; by switching another lever I found I could climb to the very top, where several telescopes gave a view of different worlds, each with a corresponding symbol.

Remembering the Earth symbol, I descended to the caverns below and looked through a fifth telescope: again, the symbol for Earth! Soon I discovered a mine cart, and after illuminating a certain symbol on a nearby control panel, I rode directly to the Earth element, and was transported back to the altar.

An airy matter

Yet another room behind the altar contained several curious horns, including a blue one which represented Air. On the floor lay a mosaic with twinkling stars; by manipulating these stars so that the blue stars twinkled and the others lay dim, I opened a passageway to a lofty room.

This same lofty room contained a most unusual machine with several levers, and several color schematics etched upon its sides. By pressing an ornament on the machine I closed the room's windows, and could then see that a green gas suffused a glass bubble set upon the machine.

Now the levers were accessible, and I

found that by setting each lever at a full, half or zero position I released different colored gasses into the bubble. By replicating the color schemes upon the machine's side, I soon availed myself of the Air element.

The Globe

At this point there was another encounter with the Nemesis – I shall not bore you with details – and a golden globe was presented to me. This globe was the key to several other locations; by climbing beneath a dome behind the altar and manipulating a series of levers, the globe could be inserted into a planetary model (in effect, it was the sun) and by rotating the planets, one could visit other locales.

Being the logical sort, I turned the wheel just a trifle, aligning the sun with Murz and teleporting myself to the Castle.

Part 1, Canto 2: The Castle

The first order of business at the castle was opening the door to the armory. This was not difficult once I noticed that the suit of armor guarding the door lacked a sword. I quickly found a broken one, repaired it, and proceeded.

Next I opened a passage to the dungeon. This was a bit trickier. Eventually, however, I realized the correlation between a mosaic depicting five knights, each with his visor up or down, and the five suits of armor scattered throughout the castle.

The dungeon was a dreary, frightening place, but I inspected it nonetheless. Horrors! I still shudder to think of it.

Yet another part of the castle still lay before me, its doors securely barred: the War Room. This I opened with a small cannon in the shape of a dog (don't ask), though the explosives had to be found in another location.

Inside the War Room was a radio. With it I could broadcast to the single old soldier who defended Irondune from the attacking army. This seemed useless at first, but while rummaging around in Kaine's room I happened to discover a scroll of war plans in a locked chest – the chest needed some coaxing to open – and in Lucien's room I had discovered a series of codes. With this knowledge I broadcast the plans to the old soldier, making several mistakes but finally getting the order right. The siege was lifted, and I was free to go!

There was a tank outside the castle, but it lacked a power source. The power I needed was in a glass case in the armory along with a suitable container, though it was dangerous indeed, and I *saved* the moment in my mind before proceeding, knowing full well that it might be my last.

With fuel in the tank, I set course for a hidden alchemy lab in the desert – the coordinates were located in a pool table upstairs. Inside the lab I formed Kaine's symbol with a handy molding machine. Then, downstairs, I placed this mold in an unusual casting device, raised a certain number of heating rods from a watery pool, and activated the device. I was sent whirling back to the temple, and stood once again before the altar.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Ripper

Part II: Ripping right along to Act 3

When we left off last time, Eddie had agreed to meet Jake at the Tribeca Center to help with Catherine's unfortunate comatose state. Recall, too, your other short-term goals carried over from Act 1 - decrypting Catherine's electronic journal, opening the locked door in the Tribeca Center, and restoring Catherine's memory (especially what she knew about the Ripper). Now that you're in a new Act, your contacts will have new things to say as well, so visit all available locations and talk everyone to exhaustion again. Return as often as necessary to confirm that people aren't holding out on you. Hints given here are based on playing in medium puzzle mode.

At the Tribeca Center

Talk to Santiago at the reception desk (several times). In the ICU, indulge what should become your habit of checking the Ripper image for progress, then go see Catherine. Talk to Burton and Falconetti; Burton leaves in a huff, but Eddie's ready to deck into Catherine's brain. If you talk to Eddie a second time, he'll suggest that you deck in through the computer to the right. So do it.

The pinkish/grayish globules coming at you are brain ICE. Shoot as many as you can. The more you shoot, the more time you give Eddie to establish the link to Catherine's brain. If you're having trouble here (or with any of the battles) there's no shame in switching to easy combat mode. In easy mode, you only need to shoot about 50 per-

cent of the brain ICE and when Eddie's made the link, he'll join in the battle. You can just sit back and relax.

When the coast is clear, try talking to Catherine. She'll just moan, but at least now you know the drill. When you've found information that can help restore her memory, you can deck back into her brain without fighting the brain ICE again.

Down in the morgue you'll learn that Farley's gotten the axe and a new pathologist, Eppels, is now your contact. Don't let this wimp's protests stop you from grilling him.

Surprisingly, back at the reception desk, you can take Burton's scan card without so much as a peep out of Santiago. Forget everything you learned playing other adventure games. You don't have to talk to Santiago, much less distract her, to get the card.

On the wards floor, unlock Burton's office with the scan card. Scan two items on her desk into your WAC. There's an easy-to-miss screen in the office. Explore all your movement options until you find one that lets you look at the open book lying on the credenza and the anatomy model.

Visit Your Contacts

At the gym, talk to the receptionist and check out the computer to learn some history about Burton and Falconetti. Burton is in the back walking on a treadmill, so talk to her, also.

You can chat with Brannon at the police station, but Magnotta won't be in his office for awhile. Take Magnotta's scan card from

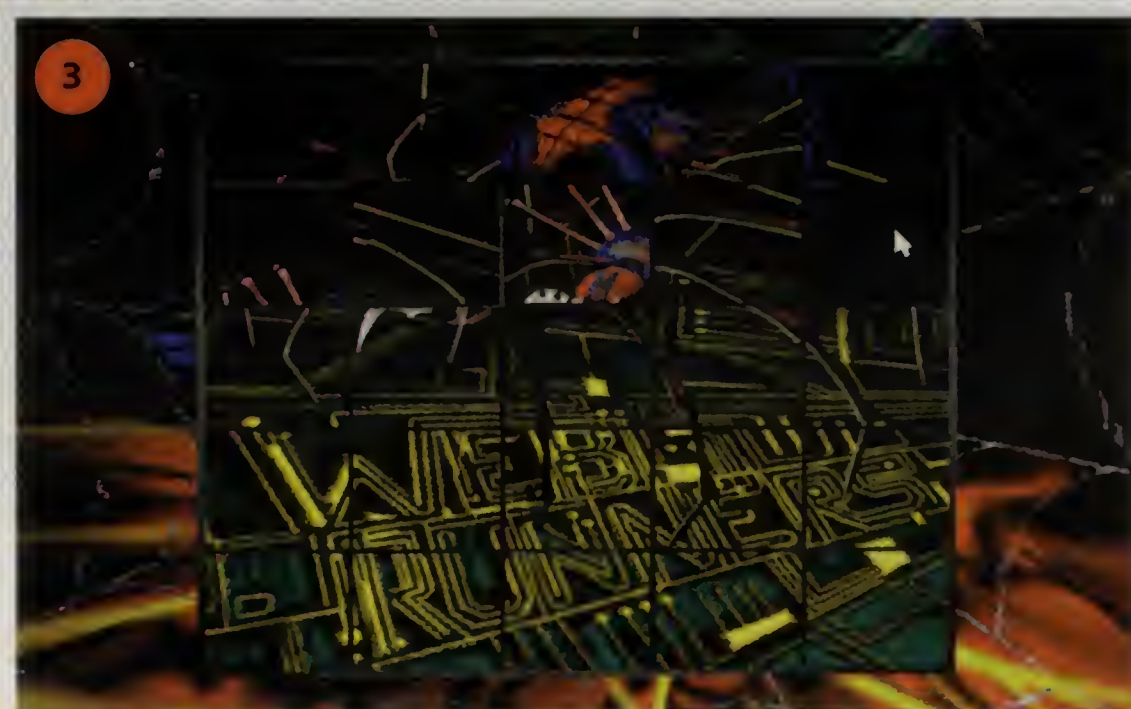
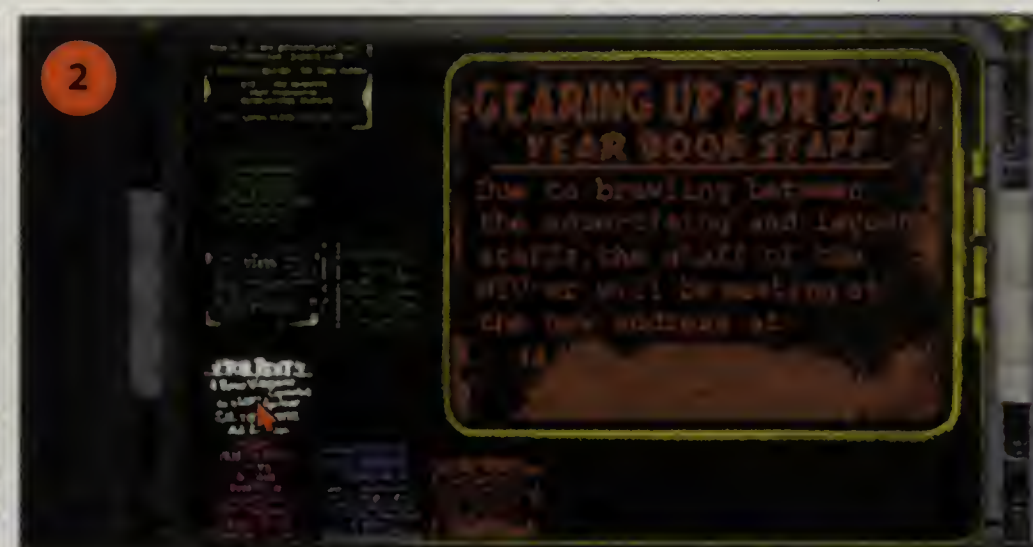
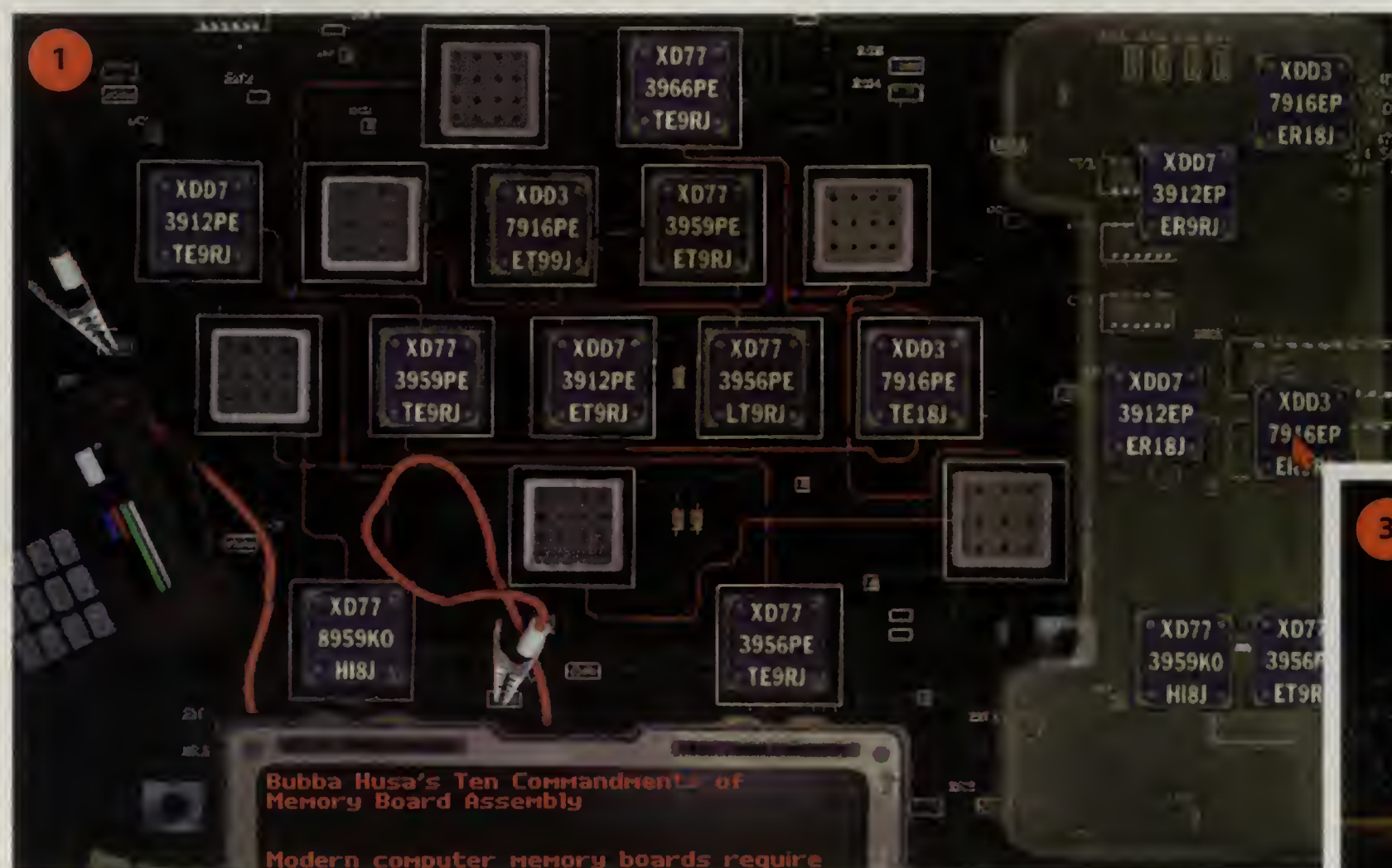
the counter (Brannon, like Santiago, won't stop you). Spy on Magnotta from within room 219-C; raise a screen and there's Magnotta doing his "job." When he shuts you out, look again.

Continue on to the file room. One file drawer requires a key. Use Magnotta's scan card, open the drawer, and read his personnel file. A word in the file will decrypt Catherine's electronic journal (to 50 percent for now, but it will resume later).

One method for continuing at this point is to talk to all of your contacts, go to Catherine Powell's Apartment, and then to the university. At the safehouse talk to Eddie; at the newsroom, to Dodds. Soap won't have anything of substance to say now. Back at the Tribeca Center's ICU, talk to Cable a couple of times. Deck into Catherine's brain to unload the first pieces of information toward restoring her memory.

A Book, a Disk, and Two Bugs

At Catherine's apartment, locate the book safe. This isn't a puzzle, so don't treat it as such or you'll want to kick puppies. The combination is in the third numbered paragraph of Catherine's partially decrypted journal, starting with "At first, I didn't have two nickels to rub together." Assign a numeral to each such reference (i.e., "At first" - 1, "two nickels" - 5, 5). Mentally number the six buttons on the safe 1 through 6 starting at the 12 o'clock position and moving clockwise. Push in your six-digit combo. A data disk will pop out.



[1] Apply some logic to the problem here [2] Align five of the flyers along the bottom of the screen to spell out the secret message [3] Work on the bottom portion with the letters first



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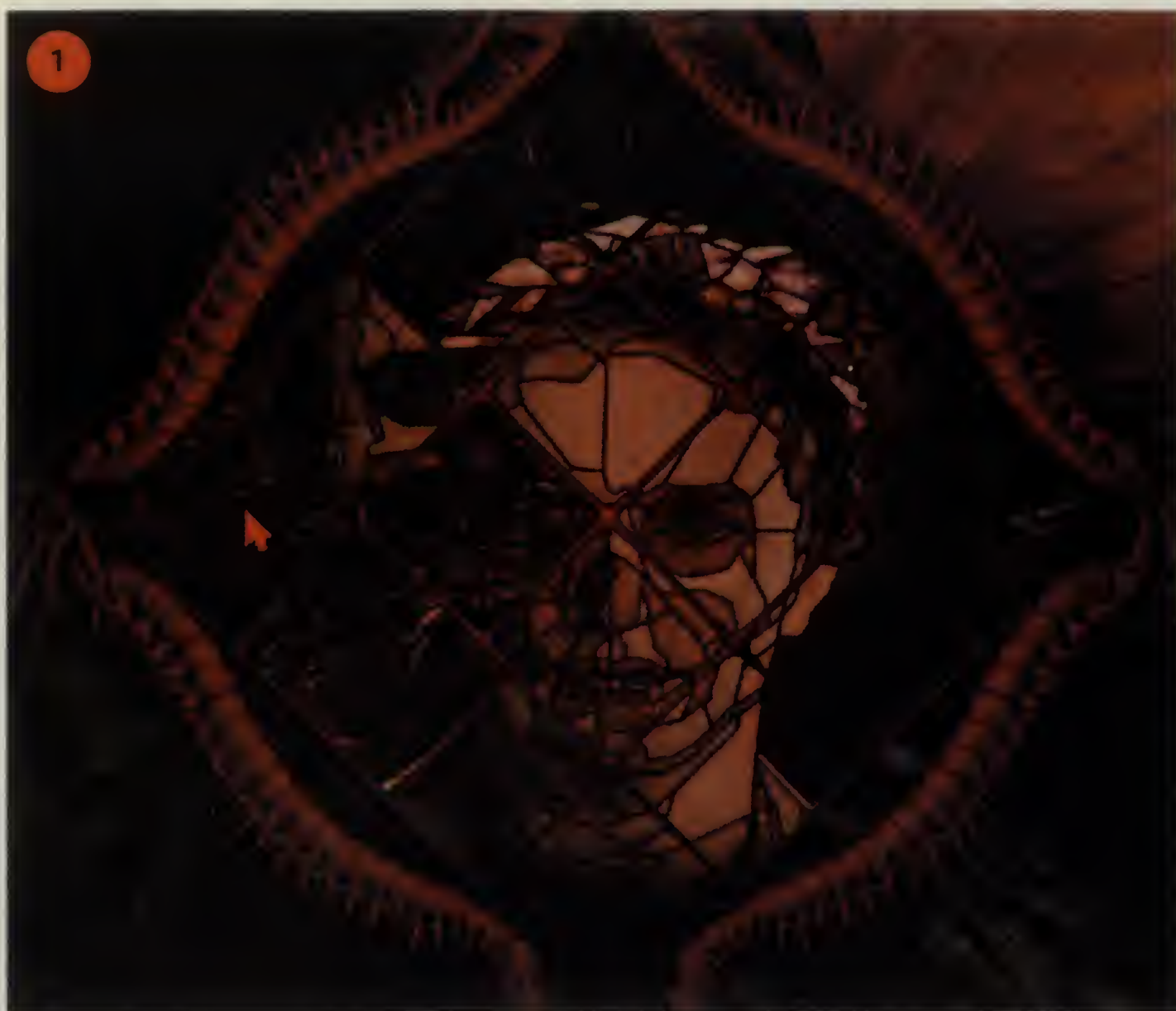
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[1] Work with the outside edges first, and the rest may just fall into place
[2] Extract the magic words [3] Set the levers, push the button, and shock the poor monkey into telling you about Burton



Use the data disk in Catherine's computer. You'll be presented with an equation that will make the liberal arts majors among you cry. Luckily, you don't need to solve for the X. Turn on the newsroom calculator and plug in the *entire* equation exactly as written. Take your reward: two surveillance bugs.

The bugs' shapes suggest where to place them. Use one bug in Magnotta's cigar box. (While in the neighborhood, go back to room 219-C and watch Magnotta at "work" again.) Use the other bug in Burton's anatomy model.

Investigating the Web Runners

At the university, talk to Professor Bech. In the hallway, arrange five of the flyers horizontally along the bottom of the bulletin board, starting at the bottom left corner. Some contain a single word you need, others several. After solving this puzzle, note the numbers at the bottom of each flyer you used...

...Because you'll need them to open the electronic lock to the Web Runners' loft. Inside, talk to Yamamoto and look at the pictures she mentions.

To learn more about the Web Runners, talk to the founders and go to the archives. You may get a transmission from Stephanie Jordan asking you to meet her at the Web Runners' Loft while you're making your rounds, or it may come later. If it comes while you're scurrying from place to place, go meet Jordan, then finish talking to Burton, Eddie, and Magnotta.

You'll be too late - Jordan's dead. You can't talk to the cops at the scene, so content yourself with Yamamoto and the pictures on the wall (something's missing... ooooh). After

learning of Jordan's death, ask all your contacts about this latest murder.

Use the address Yamamoto gave you and confront the sliding tiles ICE at the Web Runners' Archive. Conveniently, ALT-H shows the completed puzzle while you're working on it. The blank space should end up at the upper right-hand corner. Put together the lettering at the bottom, then the spider portion. You shouldn't have to disturb the lower three rows after you have them set up.

View the screen inside the archives eight times to get the low down on each of eight Web Runners celebs, then go fill Catherine in. While you're in the Tribeca Center, check the Ripper picture and admire its progress.

Talk to Magnotta again, and to Burton. When the original Web Runners among your contacts are talked out, look for Jordan's body in the Tribeca Center morgue.

Burton's Secret Lab

Chat with Eppels. He'll volunteer some limited help if you fix his computer.

The circuit manual from Soap's contains all the information necessary to perform this surgery. Start with the center circuit that has the closest connections (place the PELT chip here). Use the quirky KOH and PETE chips in the lower, distant positions. When the computer is fixed, you'll learn that Jordan's body is through a door right there in the morgue, but another, voice-locked door blocks your way.

Catherine's journal has continued decrypting, and the fourth numbered paragraph relates her thoughts about the voice lock. Follow her lead: visit Soap and the Virtual Library. At the gym, record Burton, then

return to the voice lock screen. Using the editor's quantize function, create and play your own recording that tells the door who "you" are and to open up. Avoid connecting lines from the quantization in your new recording. Your command must sound natural to fool the door lock.

In the secret lab, look at the chart appended to Jordan's body. Use the gadget on the counter to see a video of Burton torturing a monkey. The monkey knows why Burton's hiding her lab, and you can shock it into telling you. Set the levers and push the button until you get two statements out of the monkey - a partial sentence and a full sentence.

Finishing Moves

Talk to Catherine, Cable, Burton, and Magnotta again. Check the electronic journal for Falconetti's second well address.

The ICE at Falconetti's well is another sliding tile puzzle, but with specific movement rules. Set up the tiles around the periphery first, then the ones in the center. Using ALT-H helps here, too.

Inside Falconetti's well, look at the book and two documents. When you've completed all of the above and leave the newsroom, you should get a WAC transmission from Farley. If you don't, try talking to your contacts again. When Farley calls, meet him at the Cafe Duchamp. Prepare yourself. It'll be an explosive meeting.

You're ready for the third and final Act of *Ripper*. If you run into a roadblock, play *Ripper* until you regain some fortitude. No kidding. Type RIPER at the DOS prompt and see how long this Easter egg keeps you amused. Heh. ■

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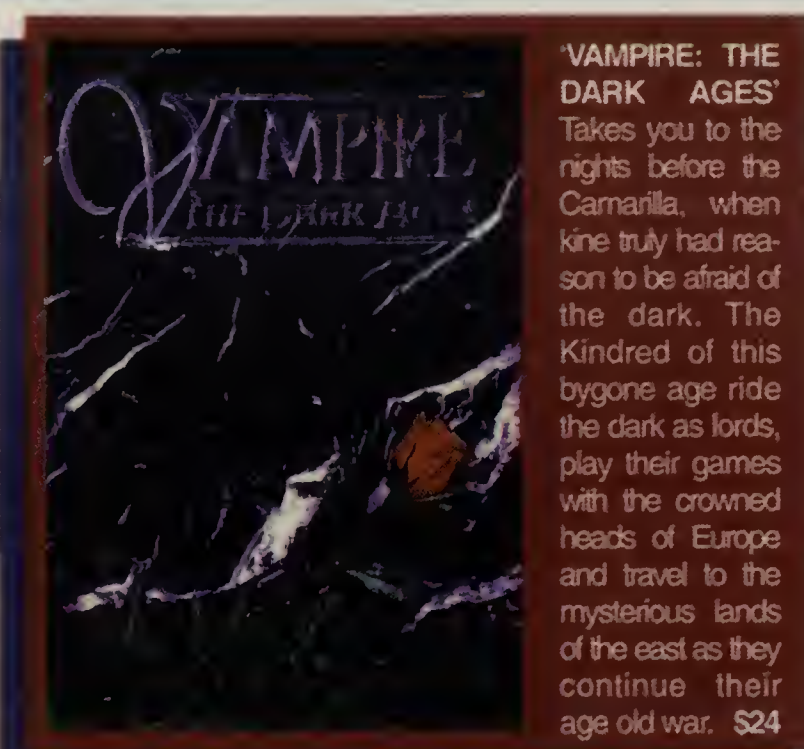
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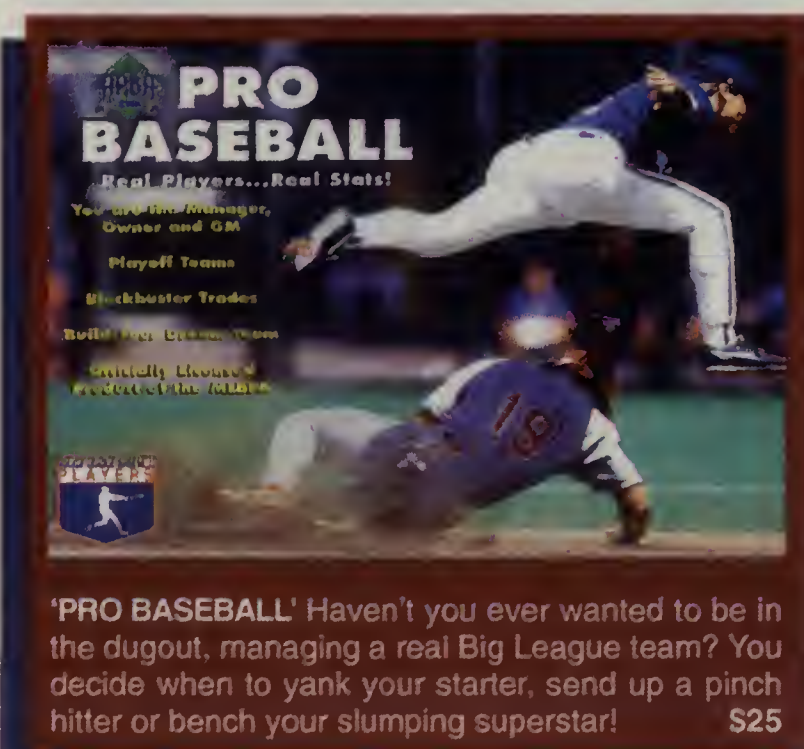
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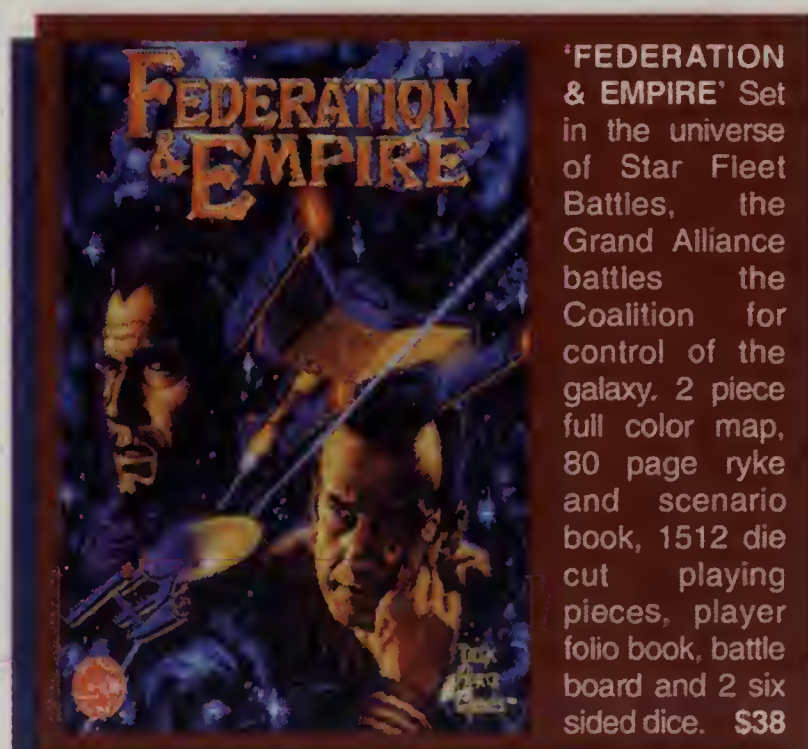
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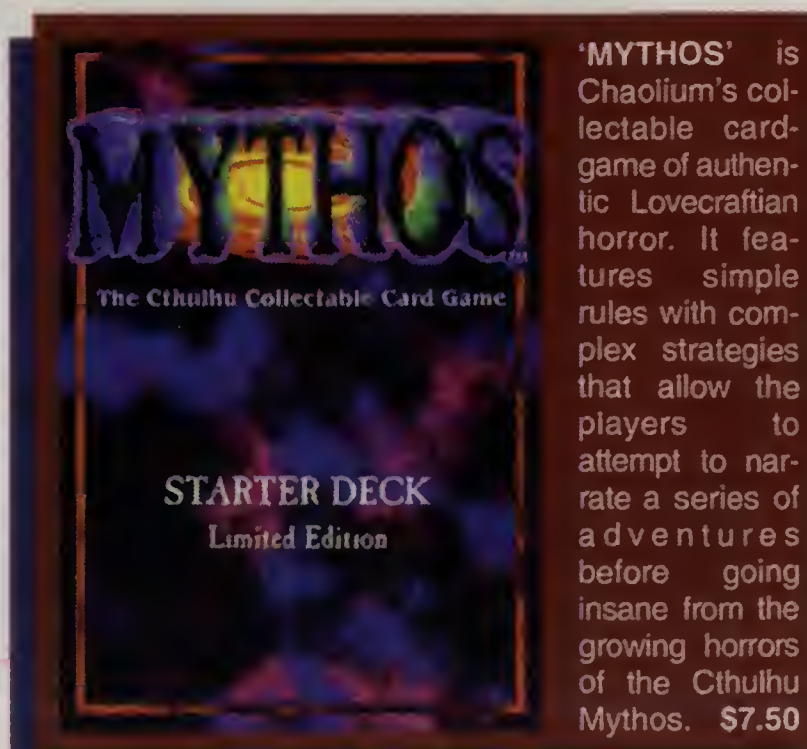
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The shape of things to come

Crunch does Los Angeles

It's always tough to predict the future, especially when it takes longer to get there than you thought it would and is missing a bunch of things you hoped it would have. It's not as surprising in the world of simulation that a project a friend asked about a year ago is still "in progress" as it might be in other areas of computer gaming, but the general industry delay has been particularly pronounced for flight and air combat sims recently. After a look at E3, it doesn't look like that's going to change any time soon, either.

I would guess the next half-year to year will consist primarily of tweaks and improvements to current designs, with the main share of that heading off towards the ever-evanescent land of online multi-player air combat. This particular fascination has a small, dedicated crowd hooked, but it remains to be seen whether the interest can be propagated outward. Perhaps the biggest challenge – and the one least interesting to veteran fans of the genre, unfortunately – is the one most publishers in the contest for quality online play will devote the greatest amount of resource to: getting Internet and online users interested in air combat gaming. This means, mainly, re-thinking the interface so it's as transparent and seamless as Windows 95 is (when it's behaving); automating many of the configuration and connection issues so most users, with a wide variety of equipment, can install and log on without very much thought; redesigning the multi-player arena so it offers the maximum amount of fun for the widest range of skills with the least amount of cruising around while the cash flows; and, finally, providing enough material off-line so that new players can train and prepare for on-line play, thus maximizing their enjoyment while connected.

The model here, I think, is, oddly, Microsoft's own Internet Explorer software. The goal with the latter is to make the actual practice of logging on, connecting, selecting and organizing information as consistent as possible with the OS interface used when off-line. In other words, the goal for Internet Explorer is to make things look all of a piece, so that while your tasks may involve some online activity, your actual actions don't have to be dedicated to working the online process. The act of getting online, transferring files, opening, etc. should be, ideally, virtually invisible, with the option available of course to get your fingers into things once you know what's going on and want to have more control over specific details.

There's nothing out there in multi-player gaming that's gotten even close in this regard; the first multi-player air combat sim



▲ I-Magic's Hind: everyone's chasing air combat's cutting edge, nice to fly something a little more historical



There are only so many years of looking at ▲ weapons load-out screens a sim pilot can stand!

under Win95 that works as well as Internet Explorer will be the one I, personally, will enjoy; I know that. Meanwhile, it's the usual routine for the most part, with some of the more mysterious technical issues finally being solved.

Beyond online multi-player (which I have to continue to admit I find a major yawn, basically because I don't have the time to fidget prior to play it still requires), we're going to get some of More of the Same, primarily in the area of more improvements in graphics quality, more detail in simulation, and – for those few current sims which offer solid mission builders – more instruction and utilities and scenarios for using the included mission builders effectively. This last area has the most immediate potential for excitement, while everyone's waiting for that next big leap in the conception of what you can do in a simulation; recent efforts which have shipped minus any kind of mission building option risk a short shelf-life, I'm afraid. We'll have to see. Sim vets never mind careful evolution

This kind of graphics balance is likely to prove effective for some time in modem/network mode ▼

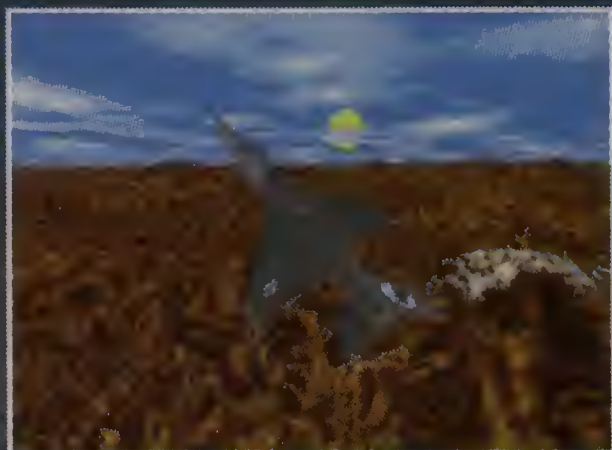


over revolution, that's clear in any case.

The continuing rapid downward spiral in CPU pricing from Intel should help with the graphics and simulation issues, that and, of course, the imminent seeding of 3D graphics coprocessing standards by both large and small software/hardware developers. A Pentium Pro mobo and CPU is already well within reasonable upgrade price limits, even if the OS present to make optimal use of the P/Pro isn't here yet. That will come.

What's really needed, though – and it's something that was (mostly) missing from E3 – is some brilliant new idea about how to make the genre exciting again. The conception of what to do in flight/air combat simulation's getting a little stale right now. More next month on who might get that ball rolling. Crunch Out.

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Intermediate turning

Part II: Airspeed vs. lift

Previously, we said that lift is a critical component for turning. We also said that lift generally increases with airspeed. However, higher airspeeds increase turn radii, which in turn, will decrease the turn rate. Even though lift generally increases with airspeed we attributed these contradictory effects to centrifugal force and lift limitations. Technology has lessened these limitations but at the same time created others.

Lift vs. Structural limitations

As high performance fighters moved toward an abundance of power and more efficient lift devices (wings and fuselages), structural integrity became a major lift performance limitation. Structural failures are every bit as limiting as lift failures, but are more dangerous. The difference is that you can recover from a lift failure. Structural failures can't be repaired in flight and are fatal sooner or later in most cases. Fortunately (or unfortunately),

advancements in materials technology have lessened and eliminated these structural limitations to the point where the pilot has become the turn performance limiting factor. While there are some who feel that future fighters will need to become un-manned remotely piloted vehicles in order to maintain "bleeding edge" performance, I'm not sure where that will lead the flight sim world. On the bright side, there have always been historic flight sims and they'll most likely continue well into the future regardless of what the real world ends up doing.

Weight vs. Lift

Nevertheless, whether your lift generating capabilities are limited by aerodynamics, brute horsepower, materials/construction, or human physiology, your aircraft's overall weight greatly affects your turning potential. Again, this directly relates back to lift. The heavier your aircraft, the closer you'll be to your lift, power, and or structural limits.

There are two additional reasons for this that we haven't discussed yet and both are due to drag. First, extra weight requires additional lift, and additional lift creates additional drag (induced drag – drag created by lift). The

other is when you fly around with external fuel tanks or weapons. These create form drag (a type of parasite drag created by the additional frontal area of the structure that has to push additional air out of the way). Regardless of how it is created, it affects your aircraft the same way; it drains your performance potential by placing you further up the performance curve than you want to be.

While there isn't much you can do about additional aircraft weight not attached to a hard point on your aircraft (you can't remove stuff from your cockpit and eject it out your canopy in a sim!), you can drop external stores and auxiliary fuel tanks. While it has been standard practice since WWII to drop your external fuel tanks before battle, many sim pilots are successful without doing so. However, experimenting during combat can be fatal, but since we're flying sims, you can experiment and only risk minor damage to your ego.

Instantaneous vs. sustained

Turn rates can be classified as either instantaneous or sustained. Just as you'd imagine, the difference between the two is the period of time they're able to maintain that rate. While you can achieve a high instantaneous G-load by yanking on the stick, you won't be able to maintain that high rate for very long. This is because that high G-load will increase drag and slow the airplane and thus reduce the maximum G obtainable. Conversely, a lower G-load produces less drag. Eventually you'll reach a point where thrust will be sufficient to overcome the drag being produced. This will allow you to maintain the current G-load and speed. This is called sustained turn rate.

While many sim pilots rely on an aircraft's sustained rate performance figure and basically ignore the instantaneous turning ability because an aircraft with a high sustained turning rate will be easier to fly in combat, I believe ignoring instantaneous turn rates is a mistake. A superior instantaneous turn rate can be very useful for defensive maneuvering and missile spoofing, but when used effectively, can be very deadly. This advantage can allow you to come to a weapons solution faster, but the downside is if your sustained turn rate is inferior, unless you make the kill immediately, you're in for trouble. It is exactly at this



[1] In the earlier days of air warfare, wing designs limited aircraft performance. By the middle of WWI, high lift wing designs were mated with very low powered engines (as compared to today - although the best available then) but yielded performance slightly better than a laden swallow (African of course!). Even though the sustained turning rates were quite impressive, the engine was the limiting factor



[2] Fast forward and we reach a point where engine power (and its associated weight) exceeded lift performance and turn rates suffered. This Zero can turn circles inside this Corsair all day long



[3] Before the introduction of "fly by wire" (computer assisted flying controls) aircraft, as high performance fighters moved toward an abundance of power and more efficient lift devices (wing and fuselages), structural integrity became a major lift performance limitation



- [1] Advancements in materials technology have lessened and eliminated most structural limitations to the point where the pilot has become the turn performance limiting factor. "Fly by wire" aircraft have helped keep the pilot from over stressing his aircraft. However, just as in the beginning, excessive weight sucks up your usable lift capability, which brings us full circle (I'm not referring to the F3 Hi-Fi weight bug!). We're back to either designing better lifting surfaces and power plants, or reducing weight. Since we only fly 'em and don't design 'em, you'll have to shed some pounds to be in top fighting shape
- [2] A tutorial and included help file should be enough to get you going. If you have problems, Calana Software has support available
- [3] Despite a couple of minor problems, such as hard to read menus when using some non-standard color schemes and a text formatting problem when using 800x600 large font mode, CS Commander does everything as advertised. Check it out

point which illustrates why a superior sustained turning rate aircraft is easier to fly (more forgiving - in this case, when your marksmanship isn't super human).

Commander on deck

It isn't any secret that I use Thrustmaster gear. While the Suncom F-15 and CH Products line of products are also excellent products, the current lack of a Suncom throttle controller limits their usefulness for me (however Suncom has announced that this situation will change shortly when their F-15 line of throttles are released) and both Suncom and CH have yet to match the programmability of the FLCS units. Depending on whether you're a "glass is half full or half empty" kind of person, the sheer amount of programming options of the FLCS/TQS/RCS has been both a blessing and a curse for Thrustmaster. While this almost limitless programmability attracts hardcore sim-heads, at the same time it intimidates the less adventurous. While the quirky programming utility included with the FLCS/TQS and WCSII are capable of doing everything that needs to be done, it took some studying to figure out even for an old computer hack like myself. I can only imagine how it would tend to limit the programming creative potential of these controllers for the un-initiated and those who aren't fairly familiar with computers. Enter *CS Commander* 1.10 - the point and click interface for programming Thrustmaster controllers.

CS Commander is a Windows 3.x utility that was written in Microsoft Visual Basic. It will work in Windows 95, but currently does not support long file names. While some of

you may balk at the Windows platform choice because, as of this writing, most sims are still DOS based, that will likely change sooner or later, so like it or not, you'll need to get used to it.

Regardless, the installation worked perfectly and very thoughtfully, there is an uninstall option. After setting up a few file location and configuration settings, *CS Commander* was up and running. I found the point and click interface much more intuitive than the TM utilities, but in all honesty you'll still need to learn the .B50 and .ADV file conventions for slash codes and statements if you want to take full advantage of all programming possibilities these controllers can provide. This isn't a limitation due to any shortcoming of *CS Commander*, but just a fact of life. In order to master a new language, you'll need to learn it. There's no other way to do it. However, *CS Commander* makes it much easier to get started if you're starting from scratch. I mean this literally as well as figuratively.

Commander quirk

As useful as it is, *CS Commander* isn't free from some minor problems. Being written in Visual Basic, *CS Commander* exhibits some of the shortcomings that other programs writing in this language have. The most obvious is unusual font sizing when running Windows in 800x600 large font mode. Also, if you use some non-standard desktop color schemes, some menu listings can be tough to read. *CS Commander* uses the Thrustmaster DOS based utility to download your program creations to your controllers. I experienced

some problems getting this setup to work properly, but after some investigation I discovered an incompatibility with my *PC Tools For Windows* desktop and the DOS utility. Another potential problem to look out for is having a B50LOAD.EXE that is too old (you can download the most recent version from TM's web site). Of course, ideally, I would have liked to see some sort of Windows based download function included. Again, this is a minor problem since once I isolated the cause, everything worked as promised.

Finally, I should mention a couple of things to watch out for. *CS Commander* doesn't support multiple statements/switches on a single line. Since most pre-programmed .B50 and .ADV files use this single line convention, this can lead to some head scratching and ruined files if you're not aware of it. Also, the macro editor will save changes without asking you, so be careful. Backup everything before opening any files.

All in all, *CS Commander* is worth the price of admission, especially if the Thrustmaster utils confuse you. Once you get everything sorted out, *CS Commander* does everything as advertised, and is the easiest way to create new .B50 and .ADV file from scratch that I've seen. Is it a total replacement for the Thrustmaster utilities? I suppose it could be eventually (you still need the TM download util), however, I've grown accustomed to the Thrustmaster DOS utilities quirks and all, so I'm unlikely to give up on them totally anytime soon.

Until next time - out of energy, ammo, fuel and ideas? Look on the bright side, you're not on fire... yet!

An explosive delight

AH-64D Longbow

Jane's Combat Simulations

DOS



It's here! The much anticipated release from Jane's Combat Simulations, *AH-64D Longbow* has arrived. While *ATF: Advanced Technical Fighters* was technically the first product to be released under the Jane's label, *Longbow* is the first to capitalize on the Jane's information gold mine by weaving it *into* the simulation rather than more or less tacking it on for its multimedia edutainment value. While it's obvious that Jane's goal was to produce an ultra-realistic helicopter combat sim, how close they actually came is really hard to pin down in terms that most will agree with. That's because "realism" is a moving target that is not only highly subjective, but also extremely hard to quantify. Are Jane's choices the right ones for you? Well, if you want an accurate flight model, *Longbow* has the best helicopter flight model ever seen on a PC. It was created using actual stability derivatives from McDonnell Douglas (the manufacturer of the real AH-64), and "hands on" feedback from actual active duty AH-64 pilots. With all flight options enabled, a kind of "buoyancy" that makes it seem like you're "balancing on a beach ball" becomes prominent. Ground effect, weight effect, transitional lift, altitude effects, wind, and turbulence have all also been modeled. The overall effect is very fluid and believable although turbulence seems somewhat mechanical. Want accurate avionics and weapons systems? *Longbow* excels. Except for one questionable exception, if it can't do it in real life, you can't do it in *Longbow*.

Even though the flight model is a joy and the graphics are spectacular (good enough for general sight seeing), *Longbow* is first and foremost a combat sim.

Numerically, there are many objects in the battlefield (supposedly arranged according to doctrine), but they seem to be spread out rather thinly. And while there's quite a bit of activity out there, the mass majority seem like targets - stationary and dumb. After destroying three of their comrades beside them, the remaining tanks just sit there waiting for the same to happen to them. Granted, this would probably be realistic for attacks made at night (where you'll do the majority of your flying - realistically), they do the same thing in broad daylight. On the other hand, the AI of the air threats (AAA, SAM's, and other aircraft) are more potent.



AH-64D Longbow:

- [1]The ATA AI is uncanny. It's like playing *Doom* against a human
- [2]The graphics in *Longbow* are top notch - good enough for general sight seeing. Best of all it runs very well on midrange hardware
- [3]There's no shortage of targets out there. "So many targets, so little time..."
- [4]In the mission planner, you can add or delete waypoints, but you can't change the defaults. Then again, why would you want to? They indicate starting, ending and target waypoints



In fact, it's probably some of the best around. There doesn't seem to be any "cheating" going on (super human skills, omniscience, etc.). The airborne opposition perform like *Doom* against human opponents. It's uncanny. They run, hide (e.g. not suicidal) and sneak up on you. Yet you can increase your chances of outwitting them by using the right tactics. Rather than flying like *Rambo*, you need to fly *Longbow* like the *Invisible Man* if you want to stay alive. (Sound like real life?)

Longbow has over 250 missions in all with the bulk of them found in the mission generator/selector. It's more of a mission

selector because it calls up missions based on your parameters rather than randomly generating them. This is a re-occurring design in *Longbow*. To give you an example, you cannot choose your exact loadouts. You can only select from pre-configured loadout packages. The same goes for the mission planner. You can add or delete waypoints, but not the default ones. You're also limited to planning your own flight path, however, your flight will follow you. (Realistic for a flight leader.) While missions can develop different circumstances depending on how you proceed, if you play the mission the same way, no ran-

domness is apparent. These are minor points and probably won't be noticed by most players (or even cared about), however hard core guys tend to gripe about them.

In the missions, you'll face Panama, Iraq, and the Ukraine. However, you will not have to face them alone. It's not "me against the world" here. You can call in artillery and air strikes on most missions. Although you can assign groups of targets to your wingie (and receive his), your interactions are basically limited to "shoot this," "don't shoot this," "come here," and "go home."

While it's nowhere near the "pay for public beta" state that many software products seem to be released as these days, *Longbow* has a couple of minor bugs. Minor problems such as being able to fly through oil tankers and the loss of missile tone when switching to side views seem to be the most offensive. No biggies.

No sim can be all things to all people; however, *Longbow* possesses the right combination to please a wide scope of sim'ers and non-sim'ers. Everyone from the rank novice, to the shoot-em- up crowd, to the hard core guys will enjoy *Longbow*. Unfortunately, the extreme, realism fanatic may not find *Longbow* intense enough. If you fly according to doctrine well, you're pretty much untouchable. This may be true to life, but some may expect it to be tougher. Those interested in the intellectual aspects of military hardware will also find enjoyable diversion here.

Longbow is a milestone. It has great graphics, excellent realism, challenging game play and best of all, runs well on mid-range hardware. However, the lack of multi-player mode (pilot does everything - un-realistic) is a big disappointment, but a multi-player update and additional missions are planned. Unless you despise helicopters, are on the fringe extreme of realism fanaticism, or lack the required hardware, *Longbow* will delight and entertain. Then again, if you've been waiting to upgrade, *Longbow* could be the reason you've been waiting for. It's that cool.

-Ben Chiu

Drumbeat: U-Boat II

Deadly Games

Macintosh

★ ★ ½ ☆ ☆

The first thing one notices upon booting Deadly Game's *Drumbeat* is the graphic quality. I mean, when the program proudly determines that, yes, your monitor is in fact capable of supporting 4 bit color and would you, in fact, like to switch over to glorious 4

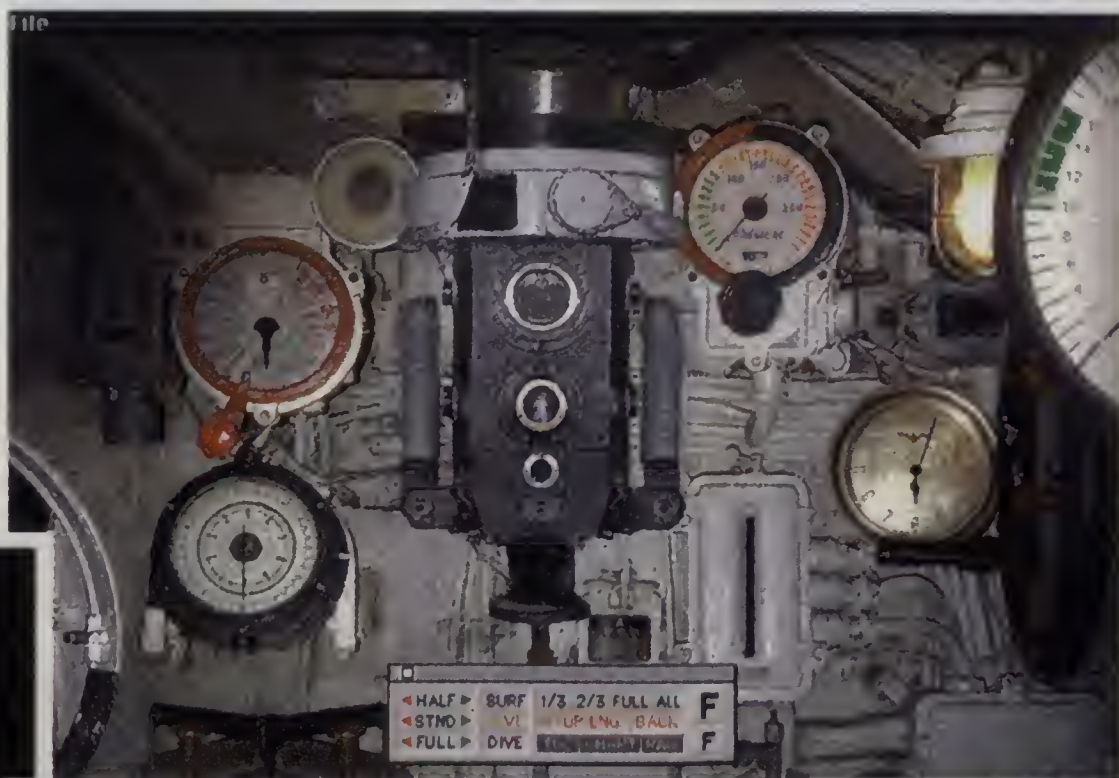
Drumbeat

The main interface screen. You'll spend a lot of time here ▶

The periscope view. When a destroyer is this close, things are looking grim indeed ▼



The Torpedo Data Computer, probably the most interesting part of the game ▶



bit color... well, it doesn't exactly shout "state of the art" to you, does it? A few seconds later you get your first taste of the game's sound quality. Or lack thereof.

So right off, eye and ear candy fans, just skip to the next review. This one isn't for you. But Deadly Games has always been behind the curve in these areas. Their games tend to focus on one aspect of the battlefield, and really dig into that aspect. *M-4*, for instance, really concentrated on the atmosphere of being in a tank.

In *Drumbeat*, they seem to be exploring the amount of patience needed to be a successful U-Boat commander, and the use of the TDC (Torpedo Data Computer). You spend much of your time cruising the open seas, diving for cover when the approach of an enemy aircraft is reported, and straining your eyes to try and make out just what sort of ship you see silhouetted against the horizon.

Since visual identification is so important, the low quality graphics become an even bigger issue. Perhaps they're meant as a feature, simulating the fog and mist so prevalent in the chill waters of the North Atlantic? Unfortunately, the human eye sees much better than this game allows us to.

Once you've had a report of a sighting (all lookout and radar activities are handled automatically by the program), you go topside to check it out with the binoculars. Now you have to determine whether it is a target or a threat by comparing the silhouette with those in the included (hardcopy) handbook. Assuming it's a threat, evasive tactics are limited to slinking away or diving for cover. Anyone who's ever played other sub sims has

learned about the thermal layer - how it can bounce back sonar waves and allow you to hide. If the thermal layer is modeled in *Drumbeat*, it isn't made clear in the manual or during game play. So you dive, turn and speed away, or you sit quietly and hope the enemy passes by.

If you've determined that the sighting is a tasty target, things get much more interesting. You start to stalk. Torpedoes are armed and you come to periscope depth, then you access the TDC. This device is modeled fairly accurately. You look up and enter the actual height of the target (as specified in the handbook) then enter the apparent height of it as shown by hash marks in the periscope viewport. Lastly, you enter the relative heading of the target (simplified to eight possible compass directions). Hit a button and the TDC figures a firing solution, if one is possible. After that, line 'em up and fire away. Alternatively, you can surface and use your deck gun.

And that's about all there is to *Drumbeat*. Admittedly, once you have a contact sighted, the game gets pretty interesting. Time can be sped up while in chart mode which helps cut down the tedium, but since contacts aren't clearly shown on the chart, you have to continually switch back and forth. A way to speed up time while keeping a contact in view would've been a welcome addition.

It seems harsh to criticize *Drumbeat* for not being what it was never intended to be - a full blown sub sim - but after playing SSI's excellent *Silent Hunter*, *Drumbeat*'s sparseness is hard to accept. What was there was fine. There just isn't that much there.

-Peter Smith

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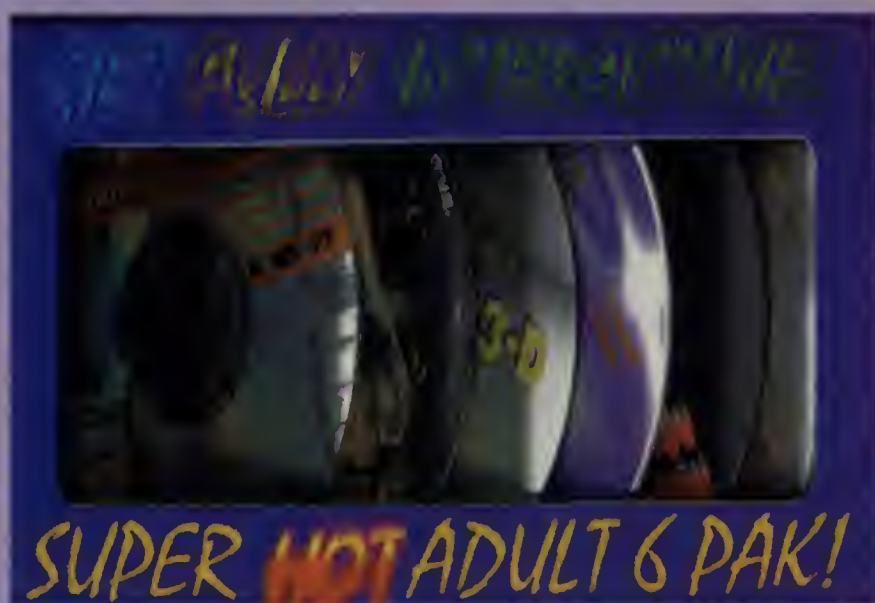
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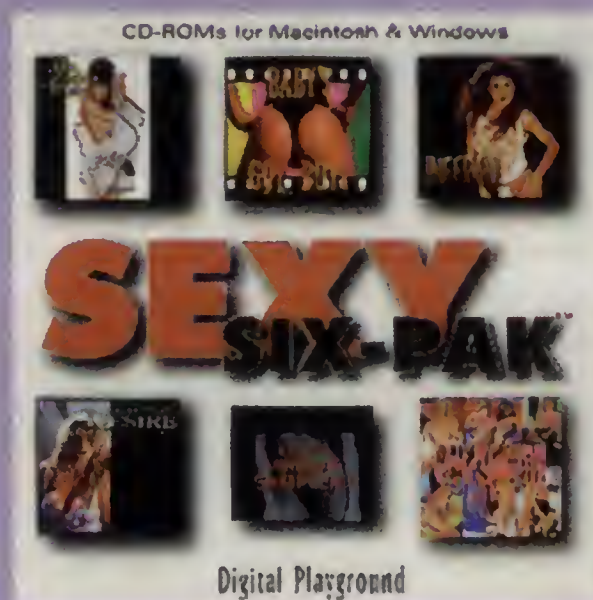
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Warbirds

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DOS and Windows 95



Man oh man has *Warbirds* changed! These are going to be your thoughts if you have not flown *Warbirds* for awhile. *Warbirds* is an on-line World War II flight simulation that competes with Kesmai's *Air Warrior*. Let us look at some of the most significant changes since version 1.02. At the time of this writing, version 1.07 is current.

A new island arena has been added and the airfields now seem closer together. This works well for this situation of air field capture and defense. Several new planes have been added, with their attendant beautiful art work. They include the Spitfire Mk 5, Douglas Dauntless dive bomber, and the P-38F Lightning. In fact, most of the aircraft art has been improved. It is very adequate for an on-line simulation, and striking as well. Nose cowls have been added. This means that when looking out of the cockpit, you now see a nose out front in your front view. Photographs I have from the front seat of the real Spitfire in flight also show the ten foot nose rather prominently. These noses help to add a feeling of really "being there." They are also useful for giving feedback as to what your airplane is doing in relation to a target, just as the real aircraft noses did. Moving fleets with aircraft carriers have been added. Now you can attack or land on them as is appropriate. This definitely adds to game play.

A Windows 95 front end has been added for those not wanting to use the DOS version. It's a little more user-friendly, and adds different sound effects. Overall most if not all of the sounds have been changed, mostly for the better. The aircraft engine sounds seem more realistic. The wind now roars appropriately. If you lose your engine, you hear its failure progress. This is very realistic, from an actual pilot's perspective. A metal on concrete/ground sound is now in *Warbirds* in case you crash. System crashes and warping (when an enemy airplane suddenly seems to rocket to another part of the sky in one second) seem less frequent than in earlier versions. Periodic historical scenarios have started as well. The first was named Kiel. It dealt with the United States Army Air Force versus the German Air Force in Europe during late World War II. Actual historical squadron versus squadron type combat has been replicated. This means that finally, historical aircraft fight historical aircraft (i.e. German fighters fighting United States aircraft instead of for example Mustangs fighting Mustangs, as in

Warbirds:

The new island theater from a Spitfire Mk 5. Note the fully working instruments from the 45 degree angle!

Warbirds now has beautiful working carrier fleets. Yes, that long nose is accurate from my experience flying modern warbirds!



Fast Attack:

Instrument realism like nothing else out there. Too bad the gameworld's oversimplified

the main arena). The flight models have also been augmented as ICI gets more declassified military data (much of it from FCI). *Warbirds* has markedly cleaned up its act recently in terms of getting the flight model data closer to what declassified military flight tests show. Maximum speeds, climb rates, roll rates and flap drag are among the improved areas.

Many other players and I find that *Warbirds'* airplanes bounce very noticeably when playing. I have not found this to be a problem when flying an actual TF-51D Mustang during 4.5g combat maneuvers within gun range on non-maneuvering targets (a historical flight test states that the P-51 flies comparably to the stock versions in pitch response and pitch stability). Because of the bounce, I find myself losing almost one kill per flight in *Warbirds*.

A permanent historical arena would be nice to see as well. It gets mighty dull after years of playing on-line games with just three or four countries all battling it out with similar fighters fighting similar fighters instead of actual historical plane matches.

The plane's stall characteristics also need work. According to flight tests, different World War Two aircraft stall differently. Some drop a wing violently and spin, while others do not. This is an issue, because close to the ground some airplanes can be pushed to the edge while others would not, since "virtual death" would result. Snap rolls also need improving.

Would I recommend *Warbirds*? The answer is: Yes, *Absolutely!* *Warbirds* is a blast



Fast Attack

Sierra

DOS




Software Sorcery – working with Sierra – almost got its act together here; *Fast Attack* has the potential of being a fascinating, in-depth modern electronic sub warfare simulation like nothing else out there. The instrument control systems in particular are impressively realistic, within the constraints of declassified info available to the designers.

The hitch – and for fans of the genre it's no minor one – is that the thermal layer is missing entirely from this game. Without a thermal layer in the ocean to work with for detection/avoidance tactics, half of what goes into submarine warfare is sliced neatly out of the picture.

So while *Fast Attack* goes six times the distance when it comes to instruments, be forewarned: you're operating in a reality different from the ones most sub crews have to deal with. And that just plain breaks the simulation at a fundamental level. Sigh.

–Steve Wartofsky



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Reader Service No. 26

EarthSiege 2

When big `bots battle against a Razor with a laser ...

You've heard the story ... Cybrid forces are massing on the far side of the moon, preparing to hop over to Earth and kick some human butt. Why? Well, let's look at it from the Cybrids' point of view. To them, the Earth is a nice six-room condo in the heart of New York City, complete with a view of Central Park and a built-in cappuccino machine, which *would* be absolutely perfect ... if only it weren't infested with rats. Before the Cybrids can move in, they'll have to kill all the vermin. Well, it's just too bad for them that those vermin are armed with energy weapons and HERCs, have already fought off one batch of would-be tenants, and are generally more dangerous than a pit-bull in a playground. Welcome to the war, soldier. Here's your flight suit, here's your HERC, and if you're looking for an easy assignment, you're out of luck. But I will give you some tips on how to keep your skin intact, your machine functional, and your commander from chewing you a new one.

One HERC, two HERC, big HERC, new HERC

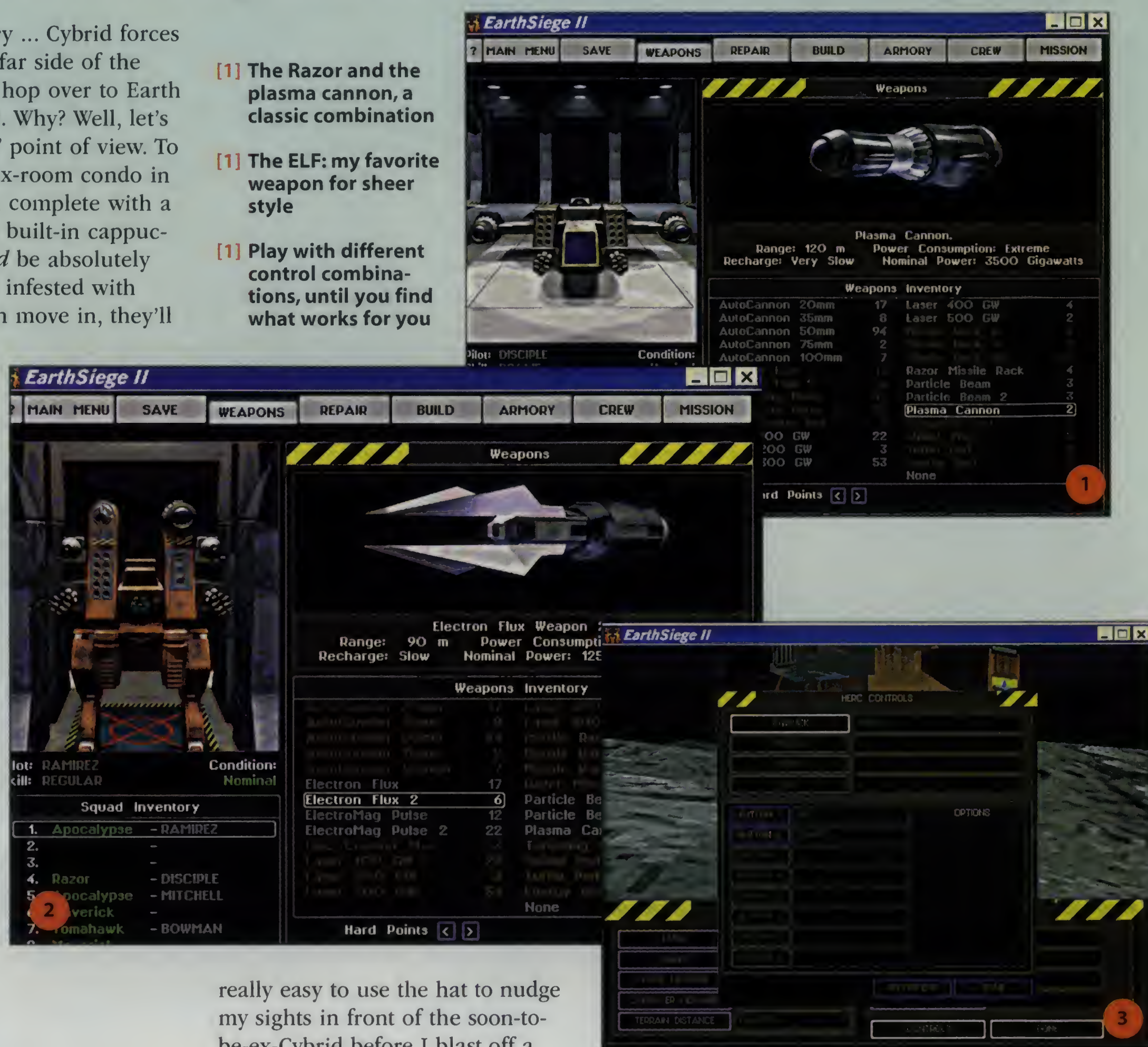
Just like in the original *Earthsiege*, you'll have to become intimately familiar with the controls for a variety of HERCs. If you don't already have one, I highly recommend borrowing, buying, or liberating from your weird cousin Bradley a four-button joystick with a "hat" switch. You can play this game with the keyboard and that generic joystick that came with your computer and still have a lot of fun, but it *is* kind of like taking a '72 Pinto out on the Autobahn. With a more advanced joystick, you can customize your buttons. I had mine set up for fire, change target, center turret, and reverse throttle. Your mileage may vary, but it's just sooooo handy having several commonly-used functions immediately available.

The hat switch comes in particularly handy when you're using the Automatic Target Tracking system. The ATT is really nice to have, but it aims at the current location of your target, rather than where the target's going to be in an instant or two. I find it

[1] The Razor and the plasma cannon, a classic combination

[1] The ELF: my favorite weapon for sheer style

[1] Play with different control combinations, until you find what works for you



really easy to use the hat to nudge my sights in front of the soon-to-be-ex-Cybrid before I blast off a round or two.

And my wingman's small HERC grew three sizes that day

I can't think of anyone who'd argue about the importance of salvage. If you'd rather see all that destructive hardware strapped to a Cybrid than to your own HERC, you're fighting for the wrong side, soldier. On the other hand, it's a little tougher to get equipment from a walking fortress with the bloodlust of a Doberman chained outside a cat show than it would be to mosey on down to the local outlet mall and pick it up at *HERCs R Us*. Unfortunately for you, all the outlet malls were bombed to bits in the last war.

Since Cybrids take a lot of killing, it's often tough to get enough salvage to make the chore worthwhile. If you completely destroy them, there isn't much left to scrounge. On the other hand, if you just disable them, you can waltz right up and pry stuff off, and all they can do is fume silently.

Your best bet is to shoot them in the legs. And not with the plasma cannon, or you're going to slag all the good stuff. My favorite weapon for salvage runs is the laser, and I've found that the ELF's and the autocannon also work quite well.

This brings me to another point. Lasers and ELF's may be great for procuring trophies, EMP guns might be just the thing for taking out enemy shields, and plasma cannons are always nice if you fancy turning your target into a pair of 2-ton smoking boots standing in a puddle of cooling metal, but keep in mind that they all draw from the same energy pool. Load up with too many energy weapons, and you may just find yourself too sapped to zap at a critical juncture. Make sure to balance your arsenal out with conventional weapons such as missiles and auto-cannons.

Oh, one final note on salvage runs. Since it takes more time and effort to leave a Cybrid

in salvageable condition, you probably won't want to take on more than one at a time. My favorite trick is to pop behind a hill when I see a patrol of two or more Cybrids approaching. Then I can blast away at them individually as they come over the rise. A Cybrid up close and personal may not be a pleasant thing, but at least it's really easy to aim at.

I do not like them in the dunes, I do not like them on the moon

Wingmen do have their uses. They're great for taking on one arm of a two-pronged Cybrid attack, particularly in a defense mission when you just can't be everywhere at once. They're great for evening out the odds. Sometimes they even make a fabulous barrier between you and the ninety-seven bolts of flaming death heading your way ... at least until they're reduced to their component atoms. It's just that eventually you'll get a little tired of their intermittently inappropriate behavior. Like offering you a little friendly fire!

I now have a rule. The rule is *never* give your wingmen an arsenal of area-effect weapons. Cramming their HERCs full of plasma cannons and missiles is simply not a good way to demonstrate your keen survival instinct. On any mission where I have

to have wingmen, I arm them with more precision weaponry and make sure they're never directly behind me.

Another important tip when dealing with wingmen is to make sure that they can't completely botch your mission goals by going trigger happy. Sit back and picture this: the mission objective is to wipe out an enemy patrol, then head to a nearby Cybrid post and download a really good recipe for halibut in garlic cream sauce. You leave your wingmen in a pitched battle with the patrol, blaze on ahead, and start downloading that recipe. But just as you get to the part about stirring the sauce for six minutes with a wire egg whisk, one of your alleged compatriots, drunk with victory, bounds up like a puppy and happily blasts the bejeebers out of the post.

This brings me to rule two. If you get in a situation where your wingmen could cause you serious hair loss, order them to stop and defend their positions as soon as you get close to the mission target.

And I said what I meant ... You must keep that base at 100 percent

You know, in any game like this, there are always a few missions you have to replay sev-

eral times before you can figure out why you're failing them. This is a highly frustrating feeling, akin to the one that you get if you're in an argument with someone from the opposite sex, and you think you might be winning, when you suddenly realize that you're arguing about money and they're arguing about something you said to them six months ago that they thought was insensitive, and you think to yourself, "Shoot me."

In order to prevent you from having to experience this particularly nasty sensation, I offer you a pearl of wisdom. A base is considered destroyed if more than 66% of the buildings are wiped out. This makes it really important to target enemy Cybrids carefully when you're fighting on your home turf. The "spray hose" approach of holding down the trigger and letting the automatic targeting system cut a line of destruction after a fleeing Cybrid might be effective, but it's also a sure way to frag a few friendly buildings and potentially blow the mission. Download and upload missions can also be a problem if you get too trigger happy ... destroy the Cybrid base you're supposed to link up to, and your mission will be a bigger failure than a mid-season-replacement sitcom. Case in point: the

first mission of the Luna sector. Your goal is to capture the enemy base, *not* reduce it to rubble. You're going to be defending that base in mission four, so it won't do you any good if it's already a ruin or a vague memory. You can shoot all the turrets you want, but leave the other buildings intact.

Well, that's about all the tips I can fit in here. Report to your HERC, soldier! We may just be rats in the walls to the Cybrids, but with your help we'll show them the difference between rats and mice. Good luck. ■



[1] Hey ... nice legs!

[2] D'oh!!!

[3] A great view of the area, albeit short



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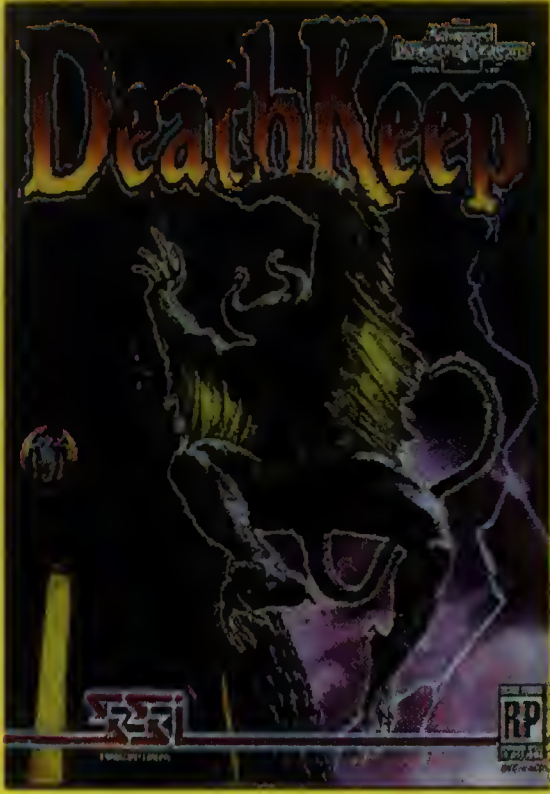
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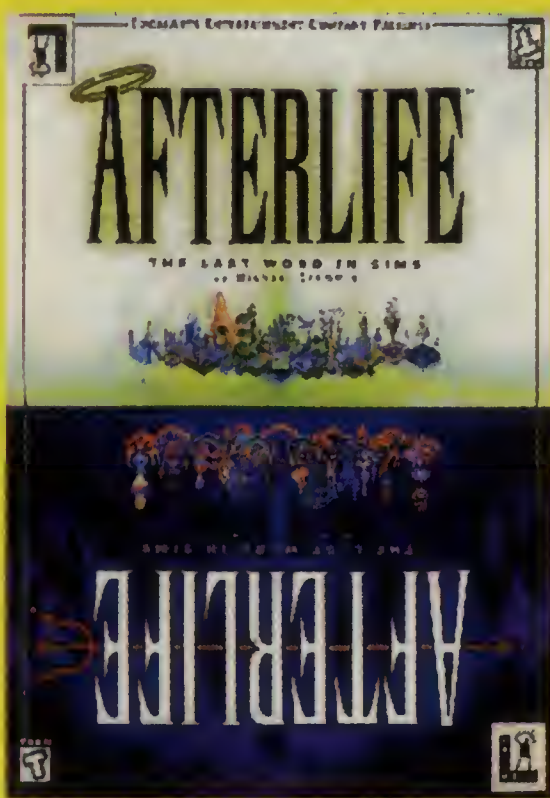
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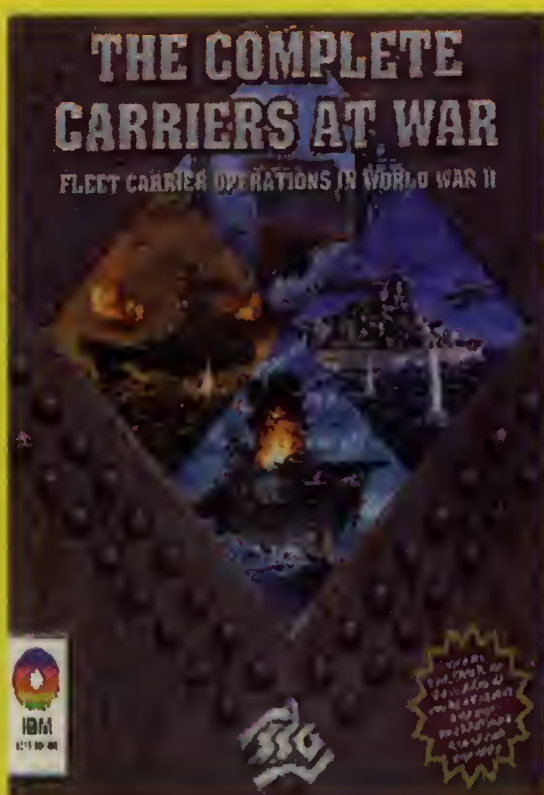
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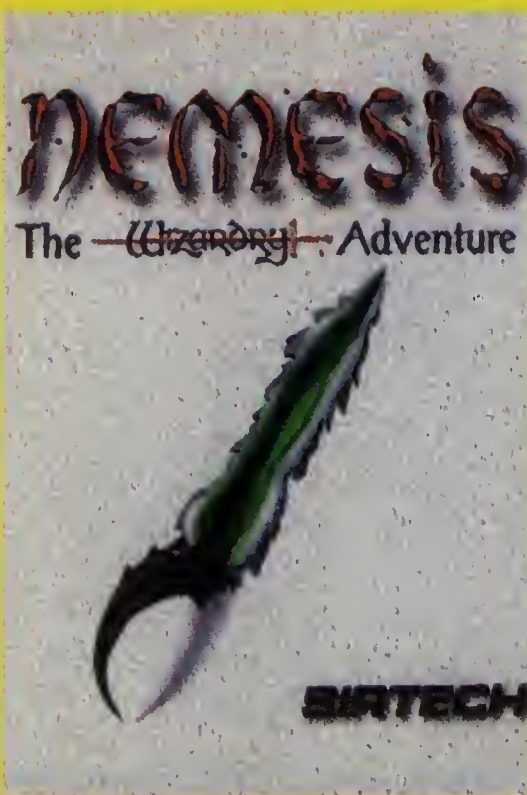
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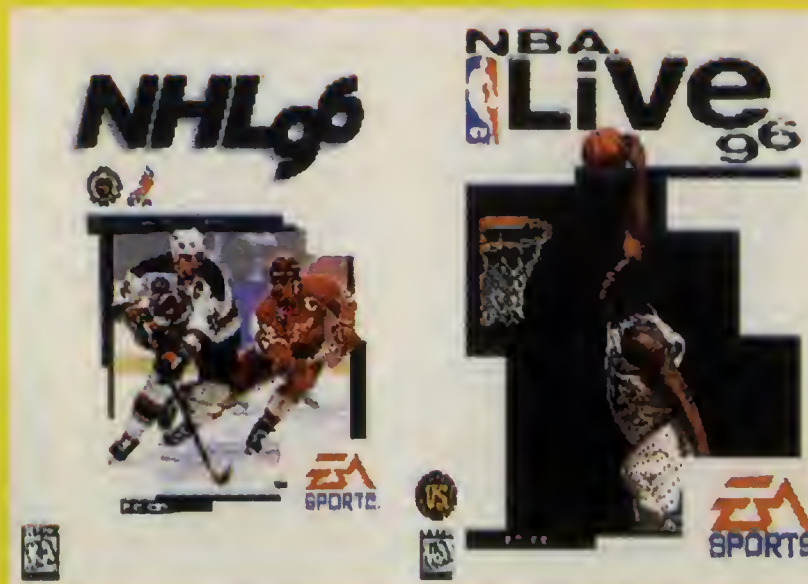
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Get virtual, and bowl for bimbos

Virtual Snooker, by Celeris Software and Interplay, uses the same excellent engine as that used in their earlier title, *Virtual Pool*. If you're familiar with that title, you'll feel right at home here, with the not so tiny exception that we're playing a game not familiar to most Americans: Snooker.

Review
Virtual Snooker ★★★★★☆
Interplay

For those not familiar with the earlier game, what we have here is the best darned felt and cue stick engine you can imagine. The interface is admittedly a bit awkward, but after a few frames it'll become second nature. Moving the mouse aims the stick. Holding the E key and moving the mouse puts english on the ball, while holding the B key raises or lowers the butt of the stick. And so on. Holding down the S key puts the mouse in stroke mode, after which sliding the mouse back and forth strokes the cue. Making the actual shots thus feels quite natural.

Any faults in the game are more a matter of taste than anything else. For instance, I have some trouble lining up shots, since the balls are so perfectly rendered. On a real snooker or pool table, each ball is bound to have some sort of tiny imperfection your eye can pick up and use as a reference point. The flawless surface of *Virtual Snooker* balls are, by contrast, confusing.

Trivial stuff, though. This product is ultimately wonderful. Sure, there are still some differences between a virtual table and a real one. You never have problems getting a good shot on the cue, even if it is hard up against a cushion or among a cluster of other balls, and you never miscue. But these benefits only act to offset the difficulties with lining up shots.

Where this product, to my mind, excels over *Virtual Pool* is with the game it models. Snooker is a game of finesse and strategy. Shot placement is imperative, and mistakes are quite costly. Since it is such a thoughtful game, it just feels more natural to play it on

a computer. The somewhat sedate pace of your opponents feels right.

In addition, the video footage is much

the States; this product gives me the opportunity to experience the game.

Virtual Snooker comes with quite a few computer opponents, and even the poorest of them ("E. Z. Pickens") will no doubt soundly thrash you until you get the feel of the game. In addition, you can play a human opponent via hot seat, modem or network. We tested the network play and found linking up to be totally hassle free under Win '95 (although *Virtual Snooker* is a DOS game).

All told, this is a great product. Adrenaline junkies stay away, though.

Slamming the balls around the table in snooker will generally only serve to give your opponent lots of points. Careful shots, picking off balls from a pack, trying to put your opponent in a difficult position—these are the skills needed to succeed in



A new frame begins



The trace mode lets you see where your shot will go



Note how perfectly rendered each ball is - a minor flaw, in my opinion

Virtual Pool CD. Where the latter had footage of a pool shark rapidly clearing a table, *Virtual Snooker* has snooker champion Steve Davis performing a perfect 147 point break (plus lots more). Watching him, especially after playing the game a while, is nothing short of awe inspiring, and it really does teach you a lot about how to play the game.

Now, much of what I said applies to the American audience, since snooker is virtually unknown over here. If I were a long time snooker player, I might not be as impressed with the product, since a lot of the reason I like it so much is that I am learning a whole new game. Face it — anyone in this country who wants to sink a rack of balls can pop down to the local billiard hall or corner pub for a quick game, and find a human opponent to boot. The real thing is better than the virtual version any day. But snooker tables are (at least in my experience) quite rare in

more useful than that on the

snooker. Web surfers who would like to learn more about snooker may want to check out this very complete snooker page:

www.ifi.uio.no/~hermunda/Snooker/

Now, if you'll excuse me, my opponent, Mrs. Offen, is waiting for me...

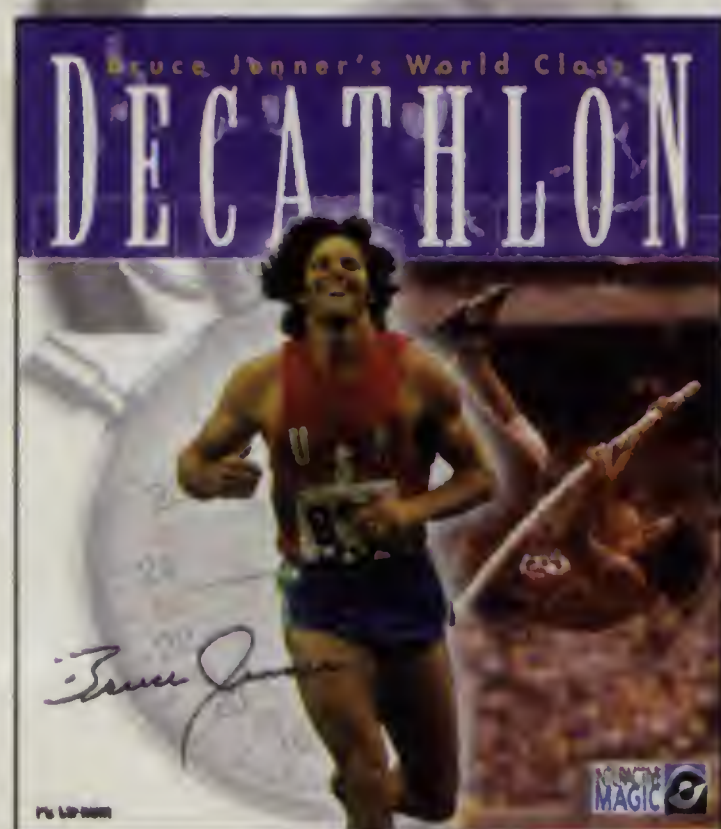
—Peter Smith

Review
VR Soccer '96 ★★★★★☆
VR Sports

The first release from Interplay's VR Sports division is *VR Soccer '96*, a game which manages to hold its own against the current soccer king, EA Sports' *FIFA 96*, and in many respects exceeds that benchmark title. With all of the features you'd expect a modern sports game to have — polygonal characters, motion captured animation, full 3D stadiums, high-resolution graphics and extensive statistics — how could it go wrong? Well, we know how it *could*

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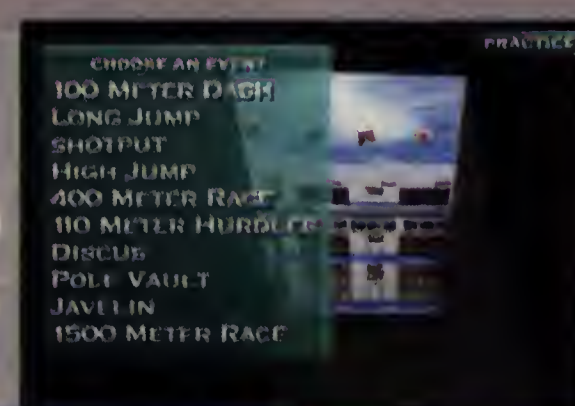


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- Bruce Jenner, the World Champion Decathlete, appears as your "on-line" coach, providing hints and tips on how to excel throughout the game.



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have gone wrong, but it turns out to be a solid title that should give soccer of fans plenty of enjoyment.

VR Soccer gives players a chance to control up to 44 international teams in single "friendly" games, practice, league play or tournaments. Players can compete against one another via a modem, while a whopping

("Now that's intelligent"). He manages to follow the highs and lows of the game, with added emphasis when it really matters. He pronounces all of the players' names as well. Overall, this is probably the best announcing in any PC sports game.

While *VR* manages to improve upon *FIFA 96* in a number of ways, such as the network play and the well-animated polygonal characters (which will be part of the feature set of *FIFA 97*), the overall gameplay of *FIFA* manages to be a bit more polished. First off, none of the camera angles the player can choose to view the action from is the "right" angle (one really longs for the day of the single camera placement).

used for all passing and shooting commands; special commands require you to press both buttons, which is rather difficult to time. There's no support for the Gravis *GrIP*, which would have facilitated multiplayer play from a single machine.

As good as *VR Soccer* is, why doesn't it feel that special? It's main problem is *FIFA 96*. That title was so good – perhaps the finest sports game of 1995 – that the incremental improvements made by *VR Soccer* over *FIFA* don't have the same sort of impact the original *FIFA* had. This in no way should diminish the work done here by Gremlin and VR Sports, however; this is still a thoroughly entertaining soccer game. If you had to choose between the two, it would nearly be a tossup, with the outright playability of *FIFA 96* giving it a slight edge. However, this is an auspicious debut for VR Sports, and bodes well for their future.

– Steve Bauman



[1] Check out those polygons

[2] Scoooooooooore

[3] Your favorite country can be found here

[4] Bimbo bowling

20, count 'em, 20 players can play over a network (for all of you with 20 computer networks at home, you've finally found your game). While mostly an action game, there is some strategy involved, as players can alter the realism and change formations during play.

Visually speaking, the game is quite attractive. The polygonal characters are motion-captured, giving them smooth and realistic animation (watching them trip is particularly amusing). The field, and overall gaming environment, is superbly rendered, with multiple views of the action, and seamless panning of the camera (with little slowdown). A high-resolution mode is recommended for faster Pentiums only, while the low-resolution modes should work on fast 486s and slower Pentiums. The interface, while not immediately intuitive, is also attractive to look at (in that EA Sports style).

The drop-dead best part of the gameplay is the superb voice-over. Never dull, and often dead-on, the announcing, by Barry Davies, adds immeasurably to the feel of the game. He can be quite hilarious, ragging on your team when you're doing poorly ("It's been a pretty poor performance," "this team has done nothing to endear themselves to the fans today"...), and even shows some sarcasm if you do something really stupid



This is a problem it shares with EA Sports' *NBA Live 96*. You find yourself flipping between the views, searching for the one that you can actually play from.

Further play will reveal that the AI isn't quite up to snuff (if you kind of run around in circles near the net, you can see how the AI works... while you're wondering why the computer can't seem to get anywhere *near* your player). It's fairly easy to score on the computer (get anywhere near the net and the goalie will come right at you), but as an offset, the computer seems to make some outrageous shots from the corner areas (at an impossible angle). In arcade mode, this leads to some entertainingly high scores, though purists may scoff.

Another problem the game has is that it doesn't bother to take advantage of joypad controllers' extra buttons. Two buttons are

where the Silicon Valley meets the Silicone Valley. Who'd a thunk it? Strip bowling. It's so seriously bad that fans of camp might actually like it. For about five minutes. Then they'll realize they actually paid money to be insulted with non-existent gameplay, absurd video (that almost has to be seen to be believed – it makes public access cable shows look like the Royal Shakespeare Company) and bored looking strippers making witty and wacky comments



like "You really know balls don't you? Duh, bowling balls, that is."

The gameplay, if you can call it that, consists of the player grabbing the ball (erm, no pun intended) and moving the mouse forward in a path that somewhat mirrors an approach a player might make. Score a certain amount of points and you can pay for strippers to perform for you. Here's a hint – if you're playing to view the strippers, use a movie player to watch the QuickTime movies on the CD and avoid the game. It'll give you about the same amount of enjoyment.

–Steve Bauman

E3 in 3D

The hardware report

ATI TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

3D Xpression

Using the *3D Rage* chipset, ATI's proprietary technology, this \$219 SRP card is supposed to be faster in 3D than anything based on S3's *Virge*, better in 2D than anything out there, and includes full MPEG-1 video playback as well. Is there anything out there that does as much for as little? Let's just hope the first thirty revisions of the software drivers for the card are gone through *prior* to shipment this time...

BANDAI DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT

Pippin @World

The \$500 Internet box is here in the form of Pippin. This console features a 66 MHz PowerPC running the MacOS, 5 MB of RAM (expandable to 13 MB), a joypad/trackball controller, and outputs for VGA, S-VHS, composite video and printer, modem and keyboard ports. Watching someone try and enter web sites via a trackball was worth the price of admission (a keyboard pops up on-



PIPPIN @WORLD

screen and you get to click on the keys), as was looking at web sites on a normal TV screen (blech). If you take the \$500, add a modem, keyboard, hard drive, extra RAM (you think most Mac games work in 5 MB of RAM?), a real monitor and a printer, you pretty much have a machine that costs the same as a low-end PowerMac, albeit one with a dumbed-down version of the MacOS. Is this the future? You can decide when it's available in a couple of months.

CH PRODUCTS

I-Force

Put this upcoming force-feedback technology and API – being incorporated into a full line of products from CH – in combination with your favorite racing or flying simulation, and you've got the next level of fun in hand. It really works, too! Go off the road and you

feel the vibrations, pull a hard bank and you feel the torque. Amazing. Planned for both a joystick and steering-wheel unit, for starters. F-16 Fighter Stick This 20-programmable-options air combat 'stick is still in the works, but has taken temporary second-place to the development of the equipment mentioned above. It's still coming; be patient.



CREATIVE LABS, INC.

3D Blaster PCI

One of the first cards out there to use Rendition's amazing *Vérité* 3D accelerator chip, this is finally available for the PCI local bus. Rendition claims deep research beyond what most 3D accelerator chip makers have gotten into, and after a little research ourselves, we're inclined to agree. Let's hope Creative gets creative with good tech support for this one, for once.

DIAMOND MULTIMEDIA SYSTEMS

Stealth 3D/2000

More "cutting edge enough" than truly top-of-the-line cutting edge, Diamond's entry into the 3D race offers good, all-around performance, with special attention given not only to the 3D side of things but to dissolving the 2D/DOS performance issues plaguing earlier attempts by the company to get into this market. S3's *ViRGE* chipset is at the heart of this card, and will probably have the merit of widespread industry support, along with performance spectacular by previous PC graphics standards, if not by comparison with some other chipsets.

FORTE TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

Cyberpuck

If you don't want to spend a thousand bucks getting this gravity-responsive 3D controller, why not spend \$59.95 instead and skip having to throw away the VR headset? Not only is it cheaper and easier on the environment, it's lighter on your neck. Forte's finally made the move to offering the *Cyberpuck* as a separate unit. Could be a hit, especially if you own all of the 3 million 3D shooters currently available for the PC.

SLAM.SITE CENTERS

At the other end of the spectrum, you won't be finding Forte's new \$3500 headset at your local supermarket anytime soon, but you *will* have a chance to try this 640x480 resolution unit out at Strategic Alliance Partners' planned location-based virtual reality centers. Coming to a major city near you, complete with sales unit nearby selling – you guessed it – the less pricey but still expensive *VFX1 Headgear*, if you want to stay out of touch with reality *all the time*.

MATROX

Matrox Mystique

With the *Millennium* currently the hot performance ticket on the PC (assuming you can overlook the compatibility problems with some games), the *Mystique* is even faster. It features 3D acceleration with true perspective correct texture mapping, superior video playback, and 64 bit Windows acceleration. It will support Direct3D and DirectDraw, RealityLab, and RenderWare.

MICROSOFT

Windows 95 Technology

Behind closed doors, Microsoft was showing a new all-digital joypad controller to augment its Sidewinder 3D Pro. Resembling the innovative Nintendo 64 controller a bit (minus the analog center controller), this eight-button joystick looks to dethrone the Gravis Gamepad. One of its best features is its joystick plug, allowing you to plug another



SIDEWINDER 3D PRO

joystick directly into it. Direct3D is on the way, and it promises to bring order to the chaos of 3D, allowing games to write to it, and it will decide if your card accelerates that particular function. DirectPlay allows easier Internet play (which is the main rea-



son why most games are Internet-enabled), while ActiveMovie allows full-screen MPEG video without an add-on card.

NUMBER NINE

Reality 332

Here's another one based on the S3 ViRGE 3D controller, with the legendary high-quality service and support of the company that got its name while thinking about The Beatles. Full S3 Scenic Highway feature connector, EDO RAM (like most of the upcoming 3D cards). MPEG-1 support an option.

PARADISE

Pipeline 64

Hmm, the name just rolls off the tongue, doesn't it? Whoops – it's mainly DRAM, 64-bit 2D and motion-video, no 3D acceleration support. Better be dirt cheap!

RENDITION

Vérité

Not a card but a specific graphics coprocessor, take one look at the specs and wonder why anyone's using anything else. Especially for simulation designs, the combination of massively-fast texel (textured pixel) performance (25 million texels per second) with sub-pixel/sub-texel positional correction, a 32bpp drawing pipeline, optimized, independent PCI bus mastering, 75Hz refresh at 1600x1200x256 colors, RISC

core, even stereoscopic imaging supported in hardware should keep most graphics-heavy 3D simulations smoking. Add Microsoft's public commitments

to support of the chip and you're most of the way there. The only wildcard is how well

the people who put this coprocessor on their card do the implementation. Fortunately they'll have had the help of the incredibly informed Rendition technical folks.

S-MOS SYSTEMS

PIX

Lest we be accused of leaving anything out, here's a chip few have heard of, which has all the usual amazing 3D features plus the option to go to 2048x2048 maximum image size. Gee, that really amazing PC found early in Infocom's *The Lurking Horror* may be closer than you think! Another feature advertised is "Point Sample Lit Perspective Correct Texture." Bye-bye, political correctness; hello, perspectival correctness. What a relief.

STEREOGRAPHICS CORPORATION

Simuleyes



SIMULEYES

Okay, bored with every hardware option offered so far for the PC? How about simulation of stereoscopic vision? Let's *really* get 3D, huh huh....

Seriously, this is a nifty and simple technique going back to the dawn of time, which offers some interesting depth perception effects. We didn't get a chance to find out whether this time around the LCD-shutter approach generates the humungous headaches from days of stereography passed, but we'll let you know if we manage to snaggle a unit for testing in the near future.

THRUSTMASTER, INC.

Phazer Pad

Apparently willing to risk their reputations as the people who design 'sticks only for NASA astronauts and for seriously over-muscled torque-mad air combat fans, the company has pitched their hat (well, there is none, actually, on this unit) into the arcade joystick ring. The difference here for a unit which looks mysteriously like a Sony Playstation pad is that it's *programmable*, Thrusty-style. This could be interesting, for the tweaks among you, to say the least.

Grand Prix 1

If the company's more expensive T2 steering wheel and pedals unit is just too close to convincing your friends and family you've

gone over the edge, draw back from it a bit and pick up this wheel instead. It attaches quietly to your desk and has everything you need at fingertips, including braking and acceleration – and it's half the price.

F-22 Pro

On the other hand, if you're one of those who considered some of the earlier complex, programmable units just a little too break-able for your Christmas hams to pound, be gleeful over the fact that the *F-22 Pro* has a) a glass-filled ABS handle, tougher than steel; b) a geared potentiometer, for greater precision; c) a cast metal base, so if you pound down the entire unit will go through your leg instead of the handle going through the base; d) a metal gimbal 'stick mechanism so once you've got the thing Krazy-Glue'd to your cast-iron desk, you'll stay locked on even if there's wind blowing from a nearby nuclear blast. Okay?

RCS Pro

While you're busy engaging in primal therapy with that *F-22 Pro*, you should take care of the Whole Person by indulging in some foot action consistent with the upper-body gorilla routine. This pedal unit will do the trick, and adds toe brakes (where supported in-software) for further realism, or for those moments when you want to listen to your more sensitive, *ying* nature.



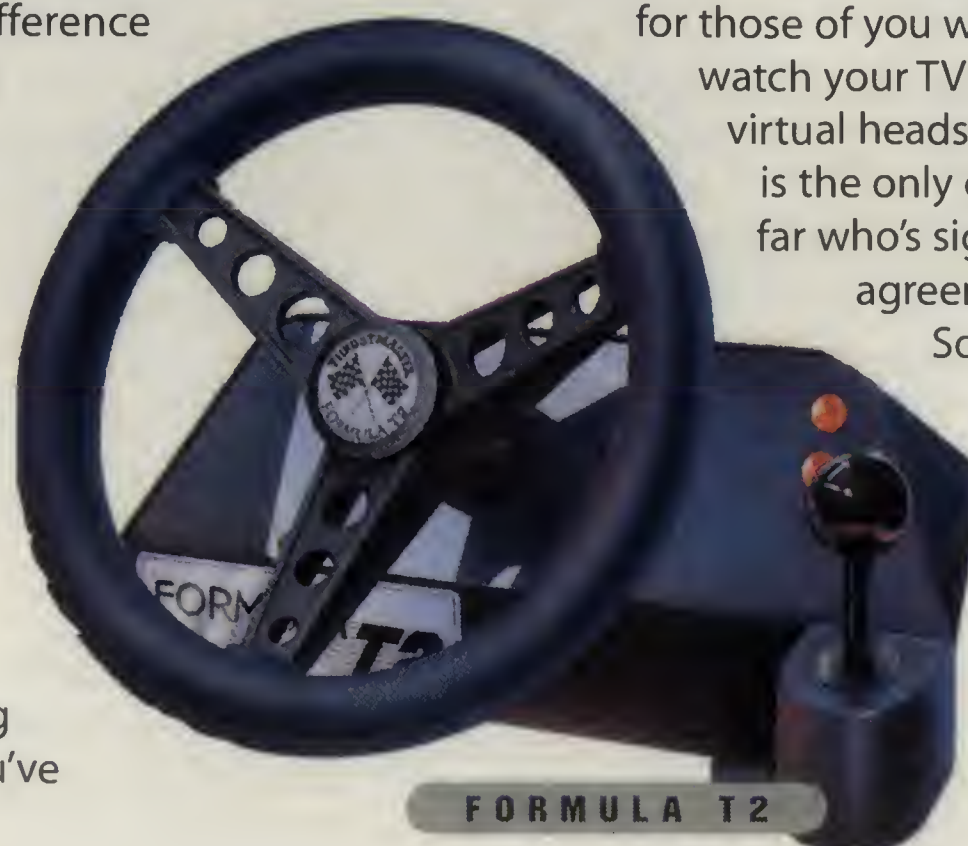
VIRTUAL PC

VIRTUAL I/O

Virtual PC

A new price point for a familiar item, and a new name. The glasses are now selling for \$499 SRP for the PC version, \$399 SRP for those of you who want to watch your TV through a virtual headset. Virtual I/O is the only company so far who's signed an agreement (with

Sony) to release a version of their headset for a console. Look for same not too far off.



FORMULA T2

The real scoop

I really enjoy Strategy Plus but was dismayed when I read Ben Chiu's Air Combat Advisor article in the April Issue 65. He seems to be an accomplished computer sim pilot, but doesn't understand some air combat academics, and there is an error in his article.

I have 1200 operational flying hours in Phantoms, have taught fighter pilots in combat training, and designed *Flight Leader*, by Avalon Hill.

Ben has confused a One Circle and a Two-Circle fight, or doesn't understand the difference between the two from the diagrams on page 84. Both diagrams depict a Two-Circle fight – only the offsets are varied.

My article in the Avalon Hill *General*, Volume 23 Number 1 clearly shows the difference in the diagrams on pages 8 and 9. Allow me to try and provide a correction:

In both instances, the two aircraft are approaching head-on and for the sake of illustration we'll say that the red aircraft is heading south and the blue aircraft is heading north, offset slightly west from the red aircraft's flight path.

If the red pilot turns away to the east from the blue aircraft as they merge (pass close by each other) and the blue aircraft sees the turn and also turns east, the resulting engagement will be a One Circle fight – the two will continue turning to a tight circle, forward aspect (between head-on and beam) intercept, probably inside minimum range for a radar missile.

If the red pilot performs the same maneuver as before but the blue pilot sees this and instead of turning east, he turns west, this results in a Two Circle fight. The two aircraft approach each other from almost a head-on aspect but with more offset, and at greater range, perhaps sufficient to employ a radar missile.

I hope this helps,
GARY C. MORGAN, Lt Col, USAF
Vice Dean of Technology
and Distance Learning

"It is better to struggle with a stallion when the problem is how to hold it back, than to urge on a bull which refuses to budge." – Gen Moshe Dayan

Got that, folks? This is what makes sims so interesting to play!

State of the mag ,take two

I am a new reader to your fine magazine (May's issue was my first new issue purchase although I have quite a few older issues I've picked up) and thought that I would drop you some comments and thoughts.

First, don't get too hot and heavy on the CD thing, I can't stand it. I used the CDs I have gotten with the last two issues a total of perhaps 10 minutes. Please do not put a lot of content on the CD, as I am subscribing without the CD. While I admire your attempt

to have more than just demos on the CD, by placing most of the review content on CD it really defeats the purpose of buying a print magazine... I enjoy flipping through a copy while watching the ball game or on the trip to work, not staring at the screen listening to the review drag on.

Please, keep those strategies coming! This is the main point which attracted me to your magazine in the first place. While the other game magazine which I have purchased for the last year and a half seems focused on reviews, yours has a much better mix of strategy and articles. Perhaps a one page cheat sheet could be added for codes and such where a full blown strategy feature is not needed.

Finally, please try to include Rebound in every issue; it's a valuable and interesting part of the magazine. If you had not merged Interactive Entertainment w/Strategy Plus you would have captured my gaming heart and wallet but as it stands I'll be sampling the other magazines for a while and watch where Strategy Plus goes with a careful eye.

Yours,
Matthew Szewczyk
szewczyk@ids.net

We hear ya, Matthew, and have already taken steps to make changes. The reviews are back in the magazine, for one thing. The CD will continue to be used creatively. Thanks for your thoughts!

No Lack of Good Ideas

I felt compelled to write to you as I see a real lack of good simulation ideas coming down the pike. I've been playing and enjoying simulations since 1989, and am a big flight sim fan, especially of historical air combat. It's been a while since there's been a good one, though *1943: European Air War* will hopefully make up for this soon [not too soon... looks like '97].

I have some ideas for simulations that haven't been done. Please, no more F-16 sims (there's so many with more on the way). Let's see some variety. Here are some ideas I'm sure will be best sellers:

1. *WW II Tank Simulation*. The graphics are already done, just remove those stupid icons and maps from *Across the Rhine* and make it a real simulation.
2. *Korean Air War Simulation*. F-86's versus Mig 15's.
3. *Vietnam Air Combat*. *Intruder* is old.
4. *WW II Air Combat Simulation* set in the Mediterranean or the Russian Front.
5. *WW II Tank Simulation* set in North Africa (Rommel's Afrika Korps) versus the Brits. T Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Edward C. Eisler
Mission Viejo, CA

People in the industry have been kicking around the above ideas for a few years now; it's a mystery why none of them have been pursued. Does anyone have any explanations?

All Dressed Up But Without a Date to Stand On

I am a faithful reader of your great magazine. I have a few questions about release dates. I own *Betrayal at Krondor* and enjoyed playing it. I was looking forward to purchasing the sequel after reading your preview of it. You stated it was due out early '96. I have heard nothing about it since. I was hoping you could fill me in on the details.

I also own *Command & Conquer*, which I also enjoyed playing. After beating the game it showed a preview of *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun*. After buying and reading April's issue, I was very confused. *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* was featured on the cover. My question is this – has Westwood scrapped *Tiberian Sun* for *Red Alert*.

My final question is also about yet another sequel. Is Blizzard considering adding another episode to the *Warcraft* saga? I know a lot of people who would like to buy that. I feel that Blizzard deserves praise for their multiplayer "spawning" technology. I hope new multiplayer games follow their lead.

Lastly, when will *Quake* be on the shelves?

Sincerely,
Matt Keller
Salem, MA

7th Level's official sequel, Return to Krondor, is scheduled for a late '96 release. Coming a bit sooner will be Sierra's Betrayal in Antara, an all-new CRPG that using the same style of play as the original game. It should be out around October.

Regarding Command & Conquer, Red Alert is effectively C&C 1.5. It re-uses the same basic engine as Command & Conquer, whereas Command & Conquer 2 will use an all-new engine.

Blizzard, at press time, had just released a Warcraft add-on disk, but Warcraft III remains merely a glimmer in Blizzard's collective eye. Rumor has it that yes, you can expect it, but what it has to offer remains to be seen. Meanwhile, be sure to watch out for Starcraft, which is effectively Warcraft in space.

Finally, Quake won't be out in stores until '97... the shareware version, though, will likely be ready for download around the time you're reading this.

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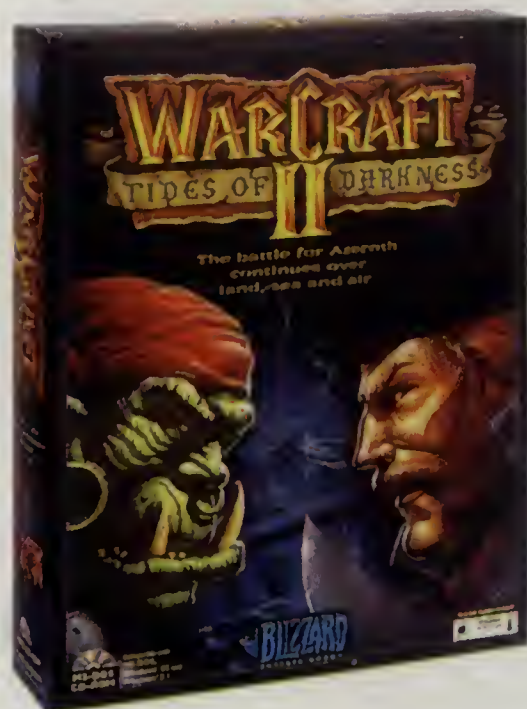


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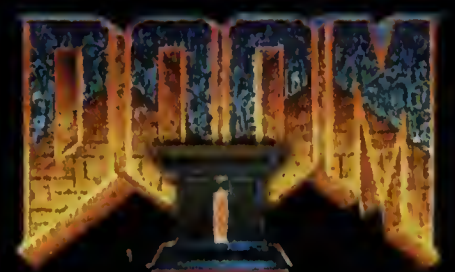
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